914.977
Min/Bul
84619

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
Royal Asiatic Society.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

E4619

BULGARIA SINCE THE WAR

00084619

BULGARIA SINCE THE WAR

NOTES OF

A TOUR IN THE AUTUMN OF 1879

BY

JAMES GEORGE MINCHIN

LONDON
C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1880

914.977
Min/Bul
84619

(*The rights of translation and of reproduction are reserved.*)

TO

CHARLES McLAREN

I DEDICATE

THIS LITTLE BOOK.

keeping my ears and my eyes open to all that was to be heard or seen. They were written in hot haste, while travelling from one town to another, in fear lest I should reach the next town before I had jotted down the information I had gathered at the last. They were written in railway carriages, in springless waggons, and under spreading trees.

While I sympathize with the Bulgarians, I do not agree with them in all their opinions. For instance, though I am careful to record their detestation of the Greeks, I regard it both as illiberal and unjust. The dislike Bulgarians show on all occasions to the Greeks undoubtedly arises from a sense of their own inferiority. The Greek is cosmopolitan; the Bulgarian is essentially a child of his own soil. Wherever the Greek is planted, there he will thrive. On the other hand, the Bulgarian keeps at home, and prospers even there with a very homely prosperity. There is room, however, for both

nations in the Turkish peninsula, nor am I one of those who would show my liking for one by disliking the other. Those who think that a free Bulgaria puts an end to dreams of an enlarged Greek Empire are wrong. The emancipation of their neighbours only stimulates the Greeks to renewed efforts, and all who know the East well must wish success to the best-educated, the most intelligent, and the most historic race in the Turkish peninsula.

I feel myself under great obligations to the consuls I met in the East for the courtesy and hospitality they showed me. Perhaps it is not invidious in me especially to mention Mr. Gould, our minister at Belgrade; Mr. Michell, our consul-general in Eastern Roumelia; and Mr. Blunt, of Adrianople.

The courtesy of foreigners to me, a stranger, has been, in my opinion, one of the most agreeable incidents of travel. From no foreigners have I perhaps received more kindness and

more courtesy than from Hungarians, of whom there are so many in the East. I would especially record my grateful thanks to General Klapka and to my dear and honoured friend Vändory Lajos.

I cannot close my preface without stating that in my travelling companion, Lionel Edward Pyke, I had not merely an agreeable companion, but a friend, to whose suggestions the reader owes much that is best in the following pages.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
FREE SERVIA	1
A BULGARIAN VILLAGE	16
ACROSS THE BALKANS	31
A BULGARIAN POLITICIAN	43
"GYMNAST" RULE	56
AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEKO PACHA ...	73
DOES EASTERN ROUMELIA EXIST?	85
TURKS OF THE CAPITAL	96
THE CITY OF THE SULTAN	116
ACROSS THE SCHIPKA	133

BULGARIA SINCE THE WAR.

FREE SERVIA.

Belgrade, Sept. 1879.

THE traveller who enters ill-paved and malodorous Belgrade will probably forget—if he ever knew—that he is entering an historic city. Belgrade is now a pretty town, but its steep and narrow streets lead up to a citadel which has played a leading part in European history. To see the sun set behind Semlin is a sight worth travelling a thousand miles to see. Standing on the summit of the fortress, behind me lay the town and the pretty wooded country; to the left flowed the Save, to the right the great Danube river; to the west the frontier town of

Semlin could be seen, while the great plain of Hungary stretched far away to the east. The bugle sounded gaily, the drums beat, for the citadel is a barrack, and below me the soldiers of Servia were at their drill. And how has this fortress fallen into the hands of its present possessors? Was it taken by storm or taken by siege? The fortress which repulsed the conquerors of Constantinople, and which has been defended, now by Austrian, now by Turkish, but always by brave soldiers, became at last but a piece on the Russian chess-board, and succumbed to an intrigue. When Kinglake travelled to the East the Turks still held the citadel of Belgrade. He speaks of Belgrade as a Turkish town, though the days of Turkish rule were numbered.

One of the first successes of Russian diplomacy after the Crimean war was the withdrawal of the Turkish garrison from Belgrade; and as the tale has often been incorrectly told,

I make no apology for giving very briefly a correct version of it. A Turkish boy had a squabble with a Christian. The little Turk drew his knife, and wounded the Christian. This incident caused ill feeling between the two quarters of the town, and soon after some Turkish women and children were attacked and maltreated in the Christian quarter. The Turks were so incensed that they began to shell the town. Very little damage was done either to life or property; but the Russians made such a stir about it, that the event is known in history as the bombardment of 1862. To satisfy Russia a Conference was summoned at Constantinople, and all the Consuls from Belgrade went there. The result of this Conference was the withdrawal of the Turkish troops from Belgrade, and one more step back to Asia was made by the Ottoman Power. A money indemnity was decreed to be paid by Servia to the Turkish proprietors of Belgrade who lost

their land and houses by this diplomatic move. This indemnity was paid to the Porte. It is hardly necessary to add that it never reached the pockets of those for whom it was intended. The Sublime Porte could not, I fear, pass its accounts in the Court of Chancery. Turks there are still in Belgrade: they form a miserable fraction of its inhabitants. Their houses are in ruins; their mosque has been turned into a gasometer; yet in their decay they still retain the pride and the intolerance of a conquering race. Indeed, so unbroken is their spirit that a Servian Jew told me only Jews could put up with them as neighbours. The Christians could not brook the arrogance of their quondam rulers. The Turkish rule is gone in Servia; nor is its expulsion for one moment to be regretted. We can only regret that it has not been replaced by something better than the present Servian Government. It is generally supposed that Servia enjoys a Con-

stitutional Government. Nothing can be more erroneous. The Government of Servia is a pure despotism.

The thoughtful men who distrust universal suffrage as the cloak for every form of misgovernment and personal rule are right. The more I see of universal suffrage in foreign lands, the more convinced I grow that the cause of liberty is more often endangered than assisted by universal suffrage. In Servia every man of the age of twenty-one, provided only he be a member of a household, has a vote. And what use can he make of this vote? He can vote for a member of the Skuptchina. The Skuptchina sits for three years. It is summoned when and where the Prince chooses. It seldom meets at Belgrade, for the Prince has a dread of foreign influences. But if any one thinks that the Skuptchina is a national assembly, he is much mistaken. The Skuptchina has not even attained the dignity of a vestry.

It meets only to register the wishes of the Prince and of his Ministers. In the first place, when an election is approaching, the leading spirits of the Opposition, under one pretext or another, are sent to prison. When the election is over they are brought up before the judge, and are, of course, discharged; but to make certainty doubly sure, the Prince has an absolute right to nominate forty out of the 170 members of the Skuptchina. There is a Senate, but this body, consisting of officials, is not in any sense a legislative assembly. The Ministers sometimes go through the form of consulting the Senate, but they do not carry their complaisance further. It is obvious that it is not in the interest of a despotic Government that the Skuptchina should represent the education and intelligence of the country. To exclude men of independence and culture an excellent plan has been contrived. In Servia the salaries of all officials are very small, while

the pensions are proportionately high. There is little fear of an official imperilling his pension by opposing the Government, but there might be a fear of an official rendered independent by his pension becoming a determined opponent of the Government. Such a man, too, would be versed in affairs and might expose the abuses of the system which had made him. The Prince has therefore wisely decreed, and made it a part of the Constitution of his principality, that no pensioner is eligible for a seat in the Skuptchina. For Servia has a Constitution, although she does not derive much benefit from it. If it were a much better Constitution than it is, greater care could not be taken to preserve it. The Constitution of Servia can only be changed by the Great Skuptchina after the ordinary Skuptchina has three times voted the change in question. The Great Skuptchina is elected by universal suffrage. It is only summoned upon important occasions, and only to say

"Yes" or "No" upon the question put before it. It meets in a field, but unfortunately it resembles the ancient democracies of Greece in this respect only. The Ministers ascend the rostrum and explain to the five hundred Servians who stand around them that they have been summoned to sanction this or that alteration in the law. There is no reciprocity in the speech-making. When the Ministers have uttered their explanations, the members are instantly required to vote. No speech-making is allowed. All discussion is prohibited. They have been simply summoned to sanction and to vote. If there is any delay, if there is the slightest hesitation, a paternal Government has foreseen the difficulty. A large body of police surround the members and incontinently push them into waggons, which have been specially provided for the purpose. This happened when the Great Skuptchina met to sanction the peace with Turkey after "the first war." Peace was

an absolute necessity, and at once voted; but when the members were beginning to discuss the conduct of the Ministers in declaring war they were promptly dispersed and sent about their business. Possibly the reader may not know that the Servians are equally proud of their first and their second war, as they style their two campaigns against Turkey. It is difficult to say which was the least glorious: the defeat they suffered at the hands of the Turks, or the short campaign they entered upon after the allied armies of Russia and Roumania had beaten Turkey before Plevna.

It is generally supposed in England that, in declaring war against Turkey in 1875, the Prince acted only on the wishes of his people, and that the Servians were enthusiastic for a war against Turkey. This is another of the popular delusions. I was myself discussing the subject with a Servian officer who had served in the campaign and had been decorated for

bravery in the field. He assured me that this war, like so many others, was a surprise even to those who declared it. The members of the Skuptchina were informed that the war would only last fourteen days. I have already attempted to explain why the members of the Skuptchina are not distinguished for their independence or their intelligence.

After much hesitation and many contradictory votes the war was declared. What followed is historical and need not be detailed here. I would only say, and that in no spirit of bitterness, that the Servian principality has fared much better than it deserved. Against the people of the country I feel no hostility, but no Englishman can approve of the Servian Government. It is worse than tyrannical; it is petty. And yet it is a Prince at once weak and despotic who has been the chief gainer by the Treaty of Berlin. Roumania, which shed her best blood, gains a useless strip of territory

in exchange for a rich one; Greece, with a great past and a great future, is neglected; but Servia, which has never done anything for anybody, is rewarded. The accession of territory to Servia adds to the number of her subjects no less than one-third more than she possessed previously to the war. The country, too, round Nisch is rich and beautiful. It is worth fighting for, and the Russians therefore fought that the Servians might enter into possession. Truly the Servian Government may say to the Russians—*Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes.*

To make war popular with a country two ingredients are required—I am not here speaking of a strictly defensive war—either an aristocracy to whom war brings honours and wealth, or a religious spirit among the people which may inspire them to a crusade. Now, in Servia we find neither of those ingredients. The Servians are not a religious people. In the country the peasants rarely go to church.

A crusade against the Crescent could not be preached among them. Servia has no aristocracy. Hungary and Roumania have large landed proprietors; but cross the Danube into Servia, and you enter a country of peasant proprietors. If a Servian attempts to buy up more land than his neighbours, the peasants call him spy, and even his life is in danger. Servia is the land of moderate incomes. There is a tradition that the grandfather of the present Prince, when he began to put things to rights in Servia, hanged twenty men for being too rich. And it is no tradition, but a positive fact, that within the last year or two the peasantry have assassinated several landed proprietors whom they accused of usury. All these so-called usurers were Christians. By a singular irony, the populace only last year dishonoured the grave of a man whose son distinguished himself by writing a *brochure* against the Jews. Speaking of *bro-*

chures, M. Ristich, who is favourable to the Jews, forbade the publication of a pamphlet which was written against their enfranchisement. This I have on the best authority—from the gentleman, a respected member of the Skuptchina, at whose request the pamphlet was suppressed. But should this be thought an isolated instance of high-handed action, I may at once state that no free Press exists in Servia; there are only two newspapers—one is official the other semi-official. Public meetings are also strictly forbidden. When it is remembered that the country is divided into districts much like our Indian Empire, with this difference, that all the powers of the State, both judicial and financial, are lodged in one person, it can easily be concluded that there are not many opportunities for ebullitions of popular spirit. Should any Servian oppose the Government, he is at once accused of disaffection to the reigning dynasty, and treated as a traitor to his country.

But there are not many such in Servia. So long as they are not taxed too heavily the Servians will not change the Obrenowitsch family for the Georgewitsch family. And, to give the Servian Government its due, the taxation of the country is light; but it will probably be different in the future, when a policy of war and annexation will have to be paid for. A committee is now considering the advisability of a loan from England, but the Servians fear a foreigner, even when he brings gifts. The Servians are, in fact, a harmless and timid people. They hold the capital of heroes, but are not themselves heroes. On those embattled towers from which the brave Hunyades defended Christian faith and Christian liberty, the Belgrade burghers walk. The Servians may without ill nature be described as a nation of small tradesmen. They are not so foolish as to be thoroughly satisfied with their own Government. They are sufficiently wise not to

raise an *émeute*, or to exchange one set of princelings for another. *Tempus et meum jus* is the motto of the reigning House. It may be the motto of their principality. At present the Servians only whisper about politics. Time may place them among the free nations of Europe.

A BULGARIAN VILLAGE.

Berkowatz, Sept.

IT was two in the morning when we reached Lom Palanka, a small town on the Danube and the Lom. The nights are chilly here, but the night dews are preferable to Bulgarian beds. So, huddled up in our rugs, my friend and I awaited the dawn of day on a terrace that overlooked the Danube. We were rewarded when the sun arose. The little town of Lom Palanka was already astir. The Turks are Easterns, and literally rise with the sun. The Turks, both male and female, were flocking to the village fountain. It is strange that this useful institution is so seldom seen in an English village. Indeed, if there were a fountain in England, and

the traveller performed his morning ablutions there, he would be stared at as a lunatic. It is not so in an Eastern village. There you are greeted with a smile of sympathy and welcome —at least from the men, for the women wear the yashmack, and are somewhat shy. And although I fear that we, with English soap and English energy, fouled the stream, we only met with kindly looks and kindly speeches. We felt what was said was kindly said, although we did not understand it. The Turks are themselves a clean people, and appreciate cleanliness in others. Having finished our toilet to our own entire satisfaction and that of the Turks, we sauntered into the straggling street which is honoured by the name of Lom Palanka. This is an age of transitions. Parisian civilization is found side by side with patriarchal simplicity. We had finished a toilet under a spreading acacia by the side of a bubbling fountain, when lo and behold, the apparition of the modern

schoolboy, with shining morning face and satchel. I cannot say he crept unwillingly to school. He went along right merrily, and bought his loaf of the Turkish baker as he passed. He was a little Bulgarian, most respectably dressed in the European style. As we had a letter of introduction to one of the masters, we followed our little friend to school. The building itself was large, the rooms scrupulously clean and lofty. It was not yet the hour for the school to begin, and the boys were amusing themselves in the gymnasium. They looked a little at the strangers, but did not laugh or stare in a rude fashion. Our friend the master was a Bohemian. The Bulgarian Government do their best to tempt the Bohemians to settle among them as schoolmasters, as the Czech language is very similar to the Bulgarian. The Bulgarians also look up to the Germans, and rightly so, as authorities on the subject of schools. This zeal for education is

most creditable, and is one of the hopeful signs of the future of Bulgaria. A short account of the system of education instituted in this little country since the late war cannot therefore be uninteresting to the English reader. There exist throughout Bulgaria primary schools, where the teaching is restricted to elementary subjects. There have also been established in all the considerable villages schools similar to the *Realschulen* of Germany; that is to say, the teaching is by no means elementary, but includes history, foreign languages, natural science, music, and drawing. Boys remain at these schools up to the age of sixteen and seventeen. When the parents of a boy can afford to pay, they pay for this really excellent schooling the sum of 20f. yearly. When the parents cannot afford to pay, the boy not only gets his education, but also his books and stationery gratis. These schools have only been planted since the war, yet I rejoice to say they show

all the signs of youthful vigour. The German master evidently took a pleasure in his task. He told me this was only the second year of his school. It had already three classes, and he hoped next year it would have four. Such a school as that at Lom Palanka is a fair specimen of the school to be found in every considerable village in Bulgaria. I noticed that the stuffed and preserved objects in the natural science room were elaborate and expensive. In fact, the specimens were far beyond my ken in science, so I will not expose my own ignorance by expatiating upon Bulgarian knowledge. I also inspected the drawings of the schoolboys from the flat; they were creditable. At the end of the room hung a drop curtain, and the schoolmaster told me that on last New Year's night the boys acted amongst themselves a Russian comedy of Poushkin. One can scarcely be surprised that Russian influence is paramount in Bulgaria. It could scarcely

be otherwise. Yet in their school arrangements they are guided more by practical than political considerations. In Lom Palanka, which is close to the Austrian frontier, German is the foreign language taught; in other villages it is French. A picture of the Czar was hung up in the schoolroom. In honouring him, in one sense they honour their founder, for without their liberator there could have been no educator. The master excused himself to me for not having the Prince of Bulgaria's picture. He had not, he said, had time to procure it. We trust his excuses will satisfy the school inspector when that official pays him a visit. Some very lusty and not unmusical strains were coming from the next room. "That," said the schoolmaster, "is the song the boys are learning to welcome the Prince with. The Prince of Bulgaria is expected at Lom Palanka next Sunday, *en route* for Bucharest." I may mention that these effusions of loyalty are not

spontaneous. Special orders have come from the Ministry that the school children are to learn this national song to greet their Prince withal. These odes of welcome, as well as the triumphal arches which have been erected in the town, are alike made to order. Indeed, for so young a State, Bulgaria appears to possess a police well organized for political purposes. One of the Prince's suite remarked in my hearing that the Bulgarian police was excellent—"quite Napoleonic." An ominous expression!

To return to our school, I asked my friend the master whether he found the Bulgarians intelligent. He made this remarkable reply: "The Bulgarian youth are not intelligent, but they wish to be intelligent." When it is remembered that two of the greatest poets of England and Germany have proclaimed that man can do all he wills to do, I do not think a higher compliment could be paid to any nation than that they will to be better than they

are. Corporal punishment is not allowed in Bulgarian schools; yet, as human nature cannot always keep pace with the directions of benevolent Governments, flogging has by no means ceased in the schools. Indeed, the account our friend gave of the morality of the elder boys showed that a sharp check of this kind was necessary. He explained the boys' misconduct by saying that they were then still Turkish. He quickly added that the morals of the boys had already improved. "The Bulgarian nation," he said with emphasis, "is making every day gigantic steps forward." There is another nation, which, given up to fatal apathy, must be beaten in the struggle for existence. I mean the Turks. There is a large body of Turks in Lom Palanka, who live as peacefully with their Christian neighbours since as they did before the war. The Osmanli in this little town are as loyal to the Prince as they were to the Sultan, yet,

unfortunately for them, they do not avail themselves of the advantages which the new Government offers them. The Jews send their children to school with the Christians, but the Turks do not. They will not even send their children to the elementary school in Lom Palanka which the Bulgarian Government has built for them. This is not from any spirit of disaffection, but from sheer incapacity to progress with the times. It is very clear that not only the reins of government but the plough itself will leave their hands. The Koran is powerless against the schoolmaster, who is abroad; and the brave Turk will give place to the bookish Bulgarian. There is a girls' school in Lom Palanka. Two hundred Christian girls are educated there. The system of teaching is the same as that in the boys' schools, but not so advanced. The priests are entirely without influence. Even the theological teaching is entrusted to laymen. When

I asked my friend the schoolmaster whether the priests had much to do with the schools, he said, "They are not allowed to enter the schools." It may interest some to know that the schools founded in Bulgaria are "godless" schools. Those who know the Greek Church and the orthodox clergy will agree with me that this is an unspeakable blessing.

As I have given the epithet of brave to the Turk, it may not be out of place to repeat what the Bulgarian schoolmaster said on the now almost happily-forgotten subject of the Bulgarian atrocities. This schoolmaster was not only a loyal subject of the new Government, but by race and education an enemy of the Turk. He had also served in the Servian army in their first war against the Turks. This Czechish hater of the Turks ridiculed the atrocities as in most cases the creation of the newspapers. He remarked that atrocities were reported to have taken place in Lom Palanka, although he,

living there, knew that the town was perfectly quiet. Religious toleration appears to be better understood by the Bulgarians than we give them credit for. At Lom Palanka, although the Jews form only an inconsiderable portion of the community, the Government have engaged a Jew master to teach the Jewish boys Hebrew.

Berkowatz, the village where I am now writing this letter, is one of the largest villages north of the Balkans. This village, like Lom Palanka, is divided between Turks and Bulgarians, and I am delighted to say that, as at Lom Palanka, the rival religions exist peacefully together. Many of the Turks have gone to Constantinople, but my host assured me that the strife between the two communities had passed. No one, he said, was allowed to insult another on the score of religion. Yesterday was the Moslem festival of Bairam. It was celebrated in this half-Christian village with every form of rejoicing. The police of the principality are

all Bulgarians, yet they took care—at least in this village—that the religious convictions of their fellow-subjects should be respected. The police are, as I said before, an important body in Bulgaria. It is only to be regretted that they are not the most important body, but unfortunately they rank second to the army. The military spirit has found its way even into this little country. We saw Bulgarian soldiers everywhere, and, what is worse, we saw Russian officers everywhere. Last night we were at a Bulgarian village, and saw the militia marshalled for the evening roll-call. They answered to their names, and then they sang a military hymn. In the quiet evening, with the blue Balkans in the background and all the peaceful sounds of the farmyard mingling with the warlike notes of the bugle, the effect was picturesque in the extreme; yet I could not but regret that the money the Government are evidently determined upon spending on their

army was not spent upon a more useful object.

Presuming that a tunnel could be made through the Balkans, the journey from Lom Palanka to Sofia would be done by an English express in two hours. At present there are no signs of a railway. The Prince is said to perform the journey in ten hours. The ordinary traveller is more than fortunate if he performs it in twenty hours. Speaking from my present experience, the journey may take me several days. And what a road and what a carriage it is! Nothing but desolation and discomfort everywhere. From Lom Palanka to Rutlowatscha is a distance of thirty English miles. During the whole of the way there was not a tree to be seen, nor sign of human habitation. Our horses were changed at a post-office, and on we jolted in our springless waggon. And if, by the help of some rudimentary Russian, we managed to make ourselves understood, it was

only to learn that there was nothing to eat. Bulgaria, from Lom Palanka to the Balkans, is certainly not a land flowing with milk and honey. One is extremely fortunate if one can obtain an egg. The changing of horses is by no means a certainty, but merely a lucky accident. We paid for the horses, and as the officials could not supply us with them they had the honesty to return to us our money; but this could scarcely recompense us for spending a day in a Bulgarian village. All the horses are in fact snapped up by the Russian officers, the locusts of the land. The bureaucracy of the country are mostly foreigners, and these foreigners naturally favour the Russians. In fact, the Russian officers are, socially speaking, the detrimentals of Bulgaria; while every traveller must hope that the Turk will remain, for the Turk alone can make coffee, and coffee forms both meat and drink in the East. Turkish coffee and the Turkish fountain are

probably the only institutions which will survive the old *régime*. They will survive it because they deserve to survive it. But while setting a high value on both, I do not think a Bulgarian village in any sense an earthly paradise. The English public have little to gain in visiting Bulgaria. They had better be content with reading about her.

ACROSS THE BALKANS.

Sofia, Sept. 25.

THE work of the correspondent in Russia is an easy one. The splendour of the buildings, the ambition of the rulers, the variety of the subject races, the magnificence of the Church—all tend to inspire the imagination and to make his narrative an interesting one. In Russia everything—even the corruption—is on a grand scale. In Bulgaria everything is petty. Russia has made Bulgaria free, but she cannot make her interesting. That passes her powers of transformation. But there is one object in Bulgaria which is not petty, and which seems made by nature as the backbone of a free people. The Balkans are grand in every light, whether

by storm or sunshine. They belong to the aristocracy of mountains. They are worth seeing, even though your carriage be like ours, a springless waggon. From Berkowatz the ascent begins. At first it is gradual. The country, with its wooded hills and well-watered valleys, reminded us of Devonshire. But soon the mountains towered over us and the streams swelled into torrents. The Balkans are bare at the summit, but the hillsides are magnificently wooded. I have never seen finer elms. We had not gone very far up when a storm broke over us. The thunder rolled among the mountains, and lightning lit up the Balkans. Unfortunately, we were in an open cart, without an umbrella, and cowering from the rain, physical discomfort quite crushed in us the imagination. Two Russian officers in Kutlowatscha had advised us not to cross the Balkans at night. They told us the country was not safe. But we disregarded their advice, and would have

pressed on had not horses failed us. We were afterwards glad of this. The scenery of the Balkans is pretty, and should be seen by daylight. In fact, odd as it may sound, the Balkans are more pretty than sublime. There are no overhanging cliffs and dark ravines. Our way lay among spreading trees and charming vegetation. Many English ferns caught my eye, but no wild flowers. The road, however, was tremendously steep and rugged. A mere handful of resolute men could block the way, and check the approach of an invading army. And yet it was up this very road that General Gourko led his victorious army to the capital of the future principality. The Russians naturally made a great noise about General Gourko's march across the Balkans, but in truth its success was more owing to luck than strategy. The Turks had a fortress on the top of the mountain, and its garrison alone could have repulsed with ease

General Gourko's army. They did not even attempt it. They retreated, and Sofia was for ever lost to the Turkish Empire. The Osmanli have never been accused of cowardice. Different reasons have been given for their conduct. They are said to have been misled by the fires which the Servians and Bulgarians lit to the right and left of them, and, thinking they were surrounded, they retreated. The view from the summit of the Balkans is not so fine as we expected. We could not see the Danube, and the country between the Danube and the Balkans is flat and uninteresting. The beauty of the Balkans lies in the rich vegetation which clothes the sides of the mountains. When we began the descent towards Sofia the aspect of the country entirely changed. There was not a tree to be seen, and the mountains, still lofty, were bare of vegetation. Some of the mountains were crowned with high cliffs, which gave them a striking appearance. Our way was not

enlivened by the *choban*—the pipe of the Bulgarian shepherd. The whole population seemed too busy to be piping. The inhabitants of the few villages we passed on our way to Sofia were all out mending the road, by which their Prince travels to-morrow to Lom Palanka. They could not have, indeed, been better employed, for the country is far more in need of good roads and bridges than of an army. All the bridges we passed were of the simplest description — merely formed of planks and gravel. The army consists of twenty thousand men. If the Prince were to deprive himself of one regiment for one year he might purchase with the money thus saved twenty steam rollers, and with these noble instruments of peace he might present his country with good roads. That would be a present worthy of a Prince.

I must not forget to mention that all along the road from Lom Palanka to Sofia, wherever there was a handful of houses (even on the

summit of the Balkans), a triumphal arch, gay with the national colours of red, green, and white, had been erected to greet the Prince. I need hardly say these owed their origin to the thoughtful government of the Prince, and not to the spontaneous loyalty of his subjects. We saw everywhere that the work proceeded under the supervision of the police. Yet what a career has this young Prince before him! Such an opportunity has seldom occurred to any man in history. He is the chosen ruler of a country which is anxious to create for herself a future. It is open to the young Prince not merely to found a dynasty, but to be called the father of his people, and, by imitating what is best in Russian history, to become the Peter the Great of a free country.

Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, is a straggling town, containing about eighteen thousand inhabitants. Many of the Bulgarians that walk about its streets are as civilized as the in-

habitants of Pesth or Bucharest. Yet the town itself is distinctly Eastern. The houses are little better than tumble-down cottages. The streets are narrow. Pavement does not exist. There is no gas, and, what is worse, no drains. The shops are nothing better than open market stalls; glass windows are a needless luxury, seen only in the houses of the rich. The Prince's palace would be a very third-rate inn in England. I learnt from one of the Prince's retinue that the holes in the staircase were mended by workmen fetched from Pesth. I believe in the future of Bulgaria, but at present the Bulgarians do not appear capable of rising to the dignity of a mechanic. Of course, I do not include in this remark the educated Bulgarians, many of whom speak French and German, and even English. I have had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of some of these since I came to Sofia, and I have been struck by their intelligence. I have spoken with some of these

gentlemen on the subject of the Turks living in friendly relations with the Bulgarians. They all agreed it was impossible, or rather they said the Turks refused to live with them. The Bulgarians, they asserted, were most anxious that the Turks should remain in the country, and not emigrate to Constantinople. One Bulgarian told me he had often asked the Turks if they had anything to complain of. No, they had nothing to complain of. Why then did they leave the country? The Turks were silent. They had no reason which they cared to state. "The fact is," said my informant, "the Turks have governed so long in this country that they don't like to be only equal with us Bulgarians." The Prince, too, has issued an ukase—that was the word of this Russianised Bulgarian — that all his subjects, both Christian and Mohammedan, must serve in the army. This, too, has greatly incensed the Turks. They have been so long accustomed to

regard the army as their exclusive province, that to serve in it under Christian officers is more than they can bear. There seems little doubt that, as the Turks left Servia and Roumania on their becoming independent, so they will now leave Bulgaria; but when the Turk flits from a conquered province he leaves almost indelible signs of his sojourn. It is not that aqueducts and good roads and other relics of a beneficent rule remain, but the town remains Eastern and unfit for Western civilization. The Turkish burial-grounds are not easily got rid of. For untidiness they can really match with the churchyards of the Greek Church. Every considerable Bulgarian village is surrounded by weedy fields, covered with stones. These stones are Turkish gravestones, and their cemeteries are often of great extent. The mosques are generally utilized by the Christians. Two of them in Sofia have already been converted into store-houses. A small public garden has been made in front

of the Prince's palace, where a military band plays in the evening. This is in itself an improvement upon Turkish arrangements, for the Turks would not allow their military bands to play in public. They considered it a disgrace to the army that its bands should play for the amusement of Christian men, and—what was worse—of Christian women. Russian officers form the aristocracy of Sofia. They roll about in carriages, and are looked at with no good will by educated Bulgarians. I was walking with the postmaster of Sofia, when one of these officers dashed past in his carriage with two horses. "Ah," said my friend, "these fellows remain in Bulgaria, because they are far better paid here than in their own country." The colonel of the Prince's guard is a Russian. A member of the first Bulgarian Parliament regretted to me that the Prince had not granted this distinction to one of his own subjects. We were then sitting in a *café chantant*, into which the young colonel

had made his swaggering entrance. The room was crowded with Russian officers. There were only two Bulgarians present beside my two friends. A *café chantant* seems especially made for Russian officers, who, as my friend remarked, never open a book. An educated Bulgarian has a vague and ill-defined dread of Russia. He is grateful to Russia for what she has done for his country, but he fears Russia may demand from his gratitude more than he cares to give. When I congratulated a Bulgarian gentleman upon the freedom of his country, upon the universal suffrage and the Constitutional Government they enjoyed, he gravely shook his head. "You cannot congratulate us," he said, "until we know what the future will bring forth." Then he related how the Russians had been foiled in their attempts to check religious toleration, to limit the freedom of the Press, and to found a Senate; yet they had succeeded in placing illiberal Ministers

around the Prince. There is also a strong party in the country who espouse the Russian cause. The priests are heart and soul for Russia, and so are most of the influential men. These partisans of Russia appeal to the sense of gratitude in the Bulgarian people, and they do not appeal in vain. In short, what the Liberals here say is, "It is true we have drawn up for ourselves an excellent Constitution, but the Ministry which Russia has chosen are doing their best to turn this Constitution into a dead letter. The Ministers are supported by the Conservatives, and our freedom may be lost before it has been enjoyed." I am reminded here of the old legend of the huntsman who shot the eagle with the magic bullet. The huntsman did not long enjoy his honours, for the fiend appeared and claimed him as his own. Bulgaria has shot Turkey with the Russian bullet. She now fears that Russia may appear and claim her reward.

A BULGARIAN POLITICIAN.

Sofia, Sept. 20.

SOFIA lies in a valley surrounded on all sides by mountains. Indeed, facing the town is the highest peak of the Balkans, on which a patch of snow was still visible. Although the neighbouring country is too parched up to be pretty, at least to one who is accustomed to the green fields of England, the evening brings to the landscape a charm of its own. Then a cool breeze springs up, and the mountains, which encircle the town, stand out blue against the setting sun. I may mention that the only curiosities the town possesses—I mean for the fashionable visitor, who knows and cares as little for Bulgaria as he does for China—are

some warm springs. I should not be surprised if, in the future, when Bulgaria possesses a railway and other Western comforts, her capital became a fashionable watering-place. At present, the Bulgarians are left to flounder about in their own warm baths, undisturbed by foreigners. There are several of these springs in the town itself; there is also one at a little distance from the town, to which well-to-do people drive to bathe. I had yesterday evening the pleasure of a drive with two Bulgarian gentlemen to this hot spring. The Bulgarians are great talkers. I had noticed that the post-boys were most voluble, and I am glad to say that both my friends were far from taciturn. Their conversation was extremely interesting, and, as they fairly represented the public opinion of educated Bulgarians, I make no apology for reporting it. One of these gentlemen represented Rustchuk in the Assembly of Tirnova, and at the elections, which will be held in a few days, I trust he will

be re-elected. The Bulgarian Parliament will not hold a more enlightened politician. The other gentleman fills an important post in this town under the new Government. I will not insult these gentlemen by describing their dress. It was European; but an Englishman may be surprised to learn that our conversation was carried on in English. The English these Bulgarians spoke was not merely well learnt, it was spoken as their mother tongue. After some experience in travelling, I do not hesitate to say that the best English I have ever heard spoken on the Continent was spoken by these Bulgarian gentlemen. Indeed, as they talked on, constantly referring to the *Times*, the *Daily News*, and the *Fortnightly Review*, I might have been listening to two extremely well-educated Englishmen. They spoke in a dispassionate tone of the former Turkish rule. They praised its system of taxation, which is still in force in free Bulgaria, and only regretted that it had been

so badly administered. We were now passing through the camp, which, with the Turkish graveyards, surrounded the town. The Russian officers, they told me, had been surprised by the quickness with which the Bulgarians learnt their drill. I think it right to mention this, as I have, in a former letter, expressed no high opinion of the Bulgarian intelligence. These privates, they said, all worked their own piece of land, and were therefore accustomed to manage their own affairs. A gymnasium was put up in the camp. The Bulgarians seem to be taking very kindly to physical exercises. They are trying to start a cricket club in Sofia. I encouraged my friends in their bold undertaking, and brought to their notice the claims of lawn tennis. They had not heard of the game. A surprising piece of ignorance for men so well-educated!

At this moment the Prince passed us in a carriage and four. His outriders, although simple-minded Bulgarians, looked all the world

like Cossacks. One of my friends noticed the resemblance, and commented on it with displeasure. My friend, the Bulgarian official, told the Russian diplomatic agent at Sofia, in a conversation he had with that dignitary, that if Russia had declared war against Turkey before the atrocities of 1876, he for one would have fought for the Sultan against the "liberating" army. This Bulgarian assured me that before the atrocities took place his countrymen looked with distrust upon the Colossus of the North. They all felt that the easy rule of the Turk was infinitely better than the iron rule of Russia. What chance, they asked, had they of liberty, if they once became subjects of the Czar? Indeed, the *Nation*, the revolutionary organ of Bulgaria, while it exhorted the Bulgarians to free themselves from Turkish dominion, was full of abuse of the great Slav Power. Yet if a Bulgarian were found with a copy of this anti-Russian paper, he disappeared; in other words,

he was sent to Bagdad, or some distant province of Turkey in Asia. But, said my friend, when the atrocities took place, we then knew we had nothing more to hope from Turkey, and must accept Russia as our deliverer. "How gladly would we have accepted our liberty from free England, instead of from Russia! But the money England sent could not wash away the blood that had been shed in the atrocities, and Russia did not allow the opportunity to slip." They believed that General Ignatieff had framed the San Stefano Treaty with the purpose that Europe might reject it. In this way Russia riveted Bulgaria to her with chains of gratitude for ever. The Bulgarians would always say it was Russia who wished to make her great, and that it was England and the Western Powers who prevented her. The game of England would be to outstrip Russia. If England were to give Bulgaria a seaboard at Salonica, she would place Bulgaria in direct communication

with Europe. At present she is shut in, and receives her civilization from Russia alone. It may surprise an Englishman to know that in the opinion of educated Bulgarians the Treaty of San Stefano is ethnologically correct. "Ethnological" was the word this Bulgarian made use of, and never have I heard my language more correctly used than by these two Bulgarians.

My friends ridiculed the claims of Greece to Thrace and Macedonia as absurd. The Greeks, they said, only held the sea-coast of Macedonia. We could not create a nation out of a seaboard. The Bulgarians came down to the very gates of Salonica, and that seaport should of right belong to Bulgaria. They pointed out that Alexander the Great was himself a Slav; that Demosthenes thundered against him as a barbarian; and that to talk of founding a Greek Empire which should stretch from the islands of the Ægean to the Danube river was a dream, and worse than a dream. The Albanians, they

said, were a race quite distinct from the Gréeks. Europe might give Albania to Greece; but to deprive Albania of Janina, her capital, and give it to Greece was monstrous. Mr. Gladstone was spoken of as a candidate for the throne of Bulgaria, but his views on the Hellenic question were not approved of. In fact, it would startle a Philhellene to hear an educated Bulgarian speak of the Greek subjects of Turkey. And to avoid all appearance of exaggeration, I will quote *verbatim* what my friend said on the subject. "The Greeks have been worse enemies of the Bulgarians than the Turks themselves." "The Armenians have suffered merely from Turkish oppression, but the Bulgarians have suffered from Greek malice as well." In the opinion of my friend, the Greek was a serpent, which whispered into the ear of the Turk deeds of wrong and of oppression. It was the Greeks who suggested the sending of Bulgarians to the distant fortresses of Asia. It was the Greeks who put down in

every way they could the use of the Bulgarian language and Bulgarian character in writing. It was the Greeks who forbade the use of the native language in native churches. It was the Greek bishops who drew immense revenues from Bulgarian sees, and spent them in the most dissolute living. And lastly, it was the Greek society of Constantinople which made all Bulgarians who rose in the Turkish service ashamed of their country. Aleko Pacha, the present Governor of Eastern Roumelia, is a Bulgarian; but it was not until Bulgaria became a free nation that the pacha discovered he was not a Greek.

Greece is not the only nation that has harassed unfortunate Bulgaria. Servia, too, has tried to make capital out of the troubles of her neighbour. Servia never wished to make Bulgaria free. Ridiculous as it may appear, the ambition of Servia was to annex Bulgaria. With this object, Servia had her propagandists in this pro-

vince of Turkey, who used to scatter grammars and other less innocent books in the Servian language. She also sent Servian schoolmasters to Bulgarian schools, in the hope that when the Bulgarians threw off the Turkish yoke they might declare themselves for Servia. Happily, Bulgaria has escaped this fate. A Bulgarian Servia would be worse than Eastern Roumelia. On the question of Eastern Roumelia my friends held, of course, a strong opinion. The Turks, they said—and I think most unjustly—kept up the disturbances in Eastern Roumelia that they might derive benefit from it, and sieze the opportunity of placing garrisons in the Balkans. I did not tell my friends that to charge the Sultan's Government with keeping up the disturbances in Eastern Roumelia reminded me of the fable of the lamb fouling the water for the wolf. However, there was much my friends said with which I did agree. It seemed absurd to them to continue the nominal dominion of the

Porte in that very province which had been the scene of the atrocities, while Europe liberated the more distant provinces of Bulgaria, which had suffered the least from Turkish misgovernment. They told me that the Bulgarians would go to war to-morrow, if they thought they had a fair chance of being allowed by Europe to annex Eastern Roumelia. I asked my friends whether England was unpopular in Bulgaria. "Unpopular!" said the official. "During the war you might as well have sworn by the devil as by an Englishman." This was not encouraging. They told me that all the common people believed that England supplied Turkey with guns. The Martini-Henry rifles which America sold to the Sultan's Government were supposed to be the gift of England, and the Russian officers took care to point this out to the Bulgarians. I have since heard from the wife of an English Consul in Eastern Roumelia that she has the greatest difficulty in getting Bulgarian servants to remain

with her, so great is their dislike of the English. The following story is also authentic and instructive:—An English Consul in Eastern Roumelia—his name is not material—brought up a young Bulgarian as his *protégé*. He was much attached to his master, until he arrived at an age to read the Bulgarian newspapers. He then learnt that it was wrong to like an Englishman. He began to distrust his master, and shortly left him. However, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the Bulgarian people have a future in the peninsula. The Bulgarians far outstrip their former masters both in intelligence and industry. Long discountenanced and oppressed, they have been suddenly placed in positions of trust and importance.

Who can wonder, then, if they do not use their power in the wisest manner? They do not even possess an aristocracy accustomed to rule. When Roumania and Bosnia became

independent of the Porte, those States possessed large landed proprietors, who had been entrusted by Turkey with the reins of government in those distant provinces. It has been otherwise in Bulgaria; she can only boast of an intelligent peasantry and a few educated men. But I do not despair of the future of Bulgaria; on the contrary, when I think that Bulgaria has only been existence for two months, I am amazed at the progress she has made.

"GYMNAST" RULE.

Philippopolis, September.

THE road from Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, to Philippopolis, the capital of Eastern Roumelia, lies across the Balkans. At Ichtiman the ascent begins. It was night before we reached Ichtiman, and as we primed our revolvers we inquired whether the road across the Balkans was dangerous. "Not in the least," said the postmaster; "there are no Circassians about." We afterwards learnt that, though the latter part of the sentence was true, the country was in a most disturbed state. I need hardly say that had the Bulgarian admitted the disturbed state of the country his fears would not have delayed us. Deliver me, I say, into the hands of a

Bulgarian robber rather than compel me to spend a night in a Bulgarian post-house! At Ichtiman Bulgarian sentinels stood on guard. This is in itself an infringement of the Treaty of Berlin. Europe has allotted Ichtiman to Eastern Roumelia, but Bulgaria declines to give it up. So on we jogged our way, concerning ourselves little with politics, but execrating the badness of the road. All sleep was impossible. The postmaster called the road "*affreux*," and certainly it was. The wonder is that it did not shake our teeth out of their sockets. At given distances on the road we were accosted by Bulgarian militiamen, who stopped all carriages that passed. The reader must not think we were still travelling in Bulgaria proper. We had reached what Europe is pleased to call Eastern Roumelia, but the inhabitants know no such fine distinctions. Those who live west of the Balkans, and those who live east of the Balkans, are still one people, though Europe

has divided them. No subject of the Porte, in Eastern Roumelia — and the Organic Statute has declared the Eastern Roumelians subjects of the Porte—would admit for one moment that he is a Roumelian. The name he claims and goes by is Bulgarian. The only sovereign he recognizes is the Czar of all the Russias.

It was the icy hour of dawn when we reached the railway station of Tatar Bazardjik. I have seen too much of starlit nights and the sunrise of late to write of them with much enthusiasm. These phenomena of nature may be interesting when seen from the balcony of a ballroom, but when viewed from a springless cart they soon pall upon you. Tatar Bazardjik is a considerable town, larger, in fact, than the capital of Bulgaria. A few weeks ago a most cruel murder took place within a few miles of the town. My informant is an English Consul in Eastern Roumelia, who, travelling that way, found the road blocked up

by a crowd. "Room, room for his Excellency!" shouted the dragoman. The crowd, like an Eastern crowd, accustomed to obey, gave way. What was the Englishman's horror to find that the crowd surrounded a cart containing the corpses of two Bulgarian peasants, who could not have been murdered many hours. "It is the Turks who murdered them! It is the Turks!" said the Bulgarians, and they told the Consul that money had been found on one of the bodies. This certainly did seem to point to a Turkish murderer, for a Bulgarian would have plundered as well as murdered. However, the Consul instituted inquiries, which conclusively proved that the perpetrator of this atrocity was a Bulgarian, and not a Turk. One of the murdered men had realized a large sum of money by the sale of pigs in Tatar Bazardjik. All this money was gone, though a small sum was found on the person of his companion. That this unfortunate man was going to Tatar

Bazardjik to sell his pigs was known to some Bulgarians, and they laid wait for him on his return. The perpetrators of this murder are still abroad in the country. Robberies with violence take place in every land, but I mention this one to show how the Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia impute to the Turk every deed of violence that is committed in this unhappy country. Yet there is no use in mincing one's expressions. Eastern Roumelia is a most unhappy country. In Bulgaria Christian and Moslem live, if not happily, at least without bloodshed together. It is true that the Mohammedans are leaving Bulgaria, but their departure is in accordance with the natural law by which a man prefers his home to foreign soil. Bulgaria is now foreign soil to the Turk, and no one can regret his leaving it to the Bulgarian peasant, to whom it belongs by right. The Turk does not appreciate freedom, and he detests equality with the Bulgarian Christian.

There are several large landed Turkish proprietors in Bulgaria. They have neither been plundered nor murdered. They either draw their rents and live out of the country, or they sell their estates to the highest bidder. As far as I can gather, there has not been one authenticated instance of oppression by Christians over Mohammedans in free Bulgaria. But when I cross the Balkans and enter Eastern Roumelia things are quite otherwise. Here I find once flourishing villages converted into heaps of ruin, mosques and schools destroyed, and crowds of houseless and starving Mohammedans. The country is terrorized by bands of gymnasts. These men are Bulgarians whom the Russians, under the cloak of teaching gymnastics, have trained into organized bands. They march about in military squads, firing their rifles, and often showing the Russian flag. Of Aleko Pacha I shall speak in a later letter. Suffice it to say that he is utterly powerless.

The floods are out, and there is none to dam the torrent. The only person who could mend matters (if he chose) is Prince Tzeretelew, the Russian Commissioner in Philippopolis. But it is not his business to see that the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin are carried out. The only governing body in Eastern Roumelia is the National Committee, a revolutionary body, which recognizes no master but Russia, and no adviser but Prince Tzeretelew. Whenever the Governor contemplates—and he rarely goes beyond contemplating—some act of justice to the Mohammedans, the National Committee summon the "gymnasts" from the neighbouring villages. These gymnasts file in armed troops into Philippopolis, and overawe the pacha. And what is the reason that, while in the neighbouring State all is order and tranquility, in Eastern Roumelia there is nothing but violence and confusion? The reason is clear. In Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia you

have one and the same race, speaking the same language, having suffered alike in the past, and looking forward to triumph together in the future. But the statesmen of Europe have ordered it otherwise. They have divided a people whom God and Nature intended to be one. And what are the consequences? We find two religions, which formerly lived in friendly communion together, engaged in a bloody and remorseless struggle. For I need hardly repeat the well-known fact that the atrocities of 1876 were not committed by Turkish peasants, but by the lawless Bashi-Bazouks who were sent into Bulgaria by the Turkish Government. The Bulgarians in Eastern Roumelia are maddened by being so unnaturally divided from their fellow-countrymen in free Bulgaria. Without entering into the question of the Bulgarian atrocities, which were perpetrated in Eastern Roumelia and not in Bulgaria, and which, though committed by

strangers, do not tend to make the native mind more friendly to the Porte, the Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia feel that the independence which the Bulgarians north of the Balkans enjoy is an injustice to themselves. They are themselves the more educated and the more civilized portion of the Bulgarian community, and yet they are kept in nominal dependence on detested Turkey. If education deserves independence, they think that they should form part of an independent State. They do not know that Eastern Roumelia is the creation of European diplomacy, and naturally impute it to their former masters. They therefore wreak on their defenceless Mohammedan neighbours vengeance for wrongs which they have never committed.

Philippopolis is a picturesque town. It stands in a plain surrounded by hills, like Sofia, but, unlike Sofia, the town is perched on an acropolis. The streets are narrow, as in

all Eastern cities, but the town is wonderfully free from smells, and consequently more agreeable to live in than Sofia. I noticed that in the suburbs they were building good villa residences, not of wood, but of stone. Indeed, Philippopolis is one of the pleasantest towns in Turkey—if I may still use that expression. To the south of the town lie the Rhodope hills, and an hour's drive will bring you to the outlying spurs of those mountains of ill fame. As a friend of mine was staying in a village in the Rhodope district, we drove out to see him. He received us with a right good English welcome in a beautiful garden, blossoming with oleanders and pink with the peach. He then took us for a drive to a Rhodope village. His wife accompanied us. I mention this merely to show that for foreigners Eastern Roumelia is as safe as any other country. It is only against each other that the inhabitants wage civil war. We got out of the carriage when

the road became rough, and walked into the village. My friend greeted every peasant he met with a courteous "Good evening!" The Turk replied with, "May God send you His blessing!" The village we had reached was half Bulgarian and half Turkish. A little stream flowed through it. On one side of the bridge squatted a small crowd of Turks. They rose respectfully as my friend approached. Like farmers all the world over, they grumbled about the weather. My friend told them they should work harder. We crossed the bridge. On the other side of the streamlet sat the Bulgarians. They arose and returned my friend's greetings with the same cordiality that the Turks had shown. But my friend did not stay so long chatting with them as he had with their Mohammedan neighbours. "Come," he said to his wife; "let us be off, or I shall have to shake hands with that scoundrel." The scoundrel referred to was the village priest, who, with

a smiling countenance, was approaching us. "That fellow," said my friend, "is a murderer." However cosmopolitan you may be, it is as well to draw the line at the assassin. I confess I do not myself care to shake hands with murderers. My friend related to me how this priest had taken his gun and shot two unarmed Turks—peace had been declared at the time—as quietly as you would shoot a brace of pheasants. This cold-blooded murder was perpetrated in my friend's garden, where we had been so pleasantly chatting. You would have little thought so peaceful a spot had been the scene of a genuine atrocity. But to finish my story. The Bulgarian priest was arrested by a gendarme and taken into Philippopolis. It was the time of the Russian occupation, and Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff reigned as Viceroy of the Czar in Philippopolis. The Prince released the priest without inflicting any punishment, and sent him back to his own village. We were

at that time passing the church in which this priestly Bashi-Bazouk performed divine service half an hour after he had shot two of God's creatures. My friend, the Englishman, did not waste time in complaining to the Russian authorities, but he went to the Exarch, or head of the Bulgarian Church. He pressed the Exarch to remove this ruffian from his post. The Exarch, dear good old man as he is, only shook his head. "The Bashi-Bazouks," said the head of the Bulgarian Church, "have shot all my good priests, and the only ones I have left are such as this."

"The Turks and Bulgarians," said my friend, as we looked back at the village we had left, "are both fine fellows, and would be living peacefully together if it were not for Russian intrigues." He then told me that the Russian propaganda in the Turkish peninsula was a plant of ancient growth. He himself had seen a Bulgarian Prayer-book in which prayers were

offered on behalf of her Imperial Majesty the Empress Catherine. That is to say, a century ago the Bulgarians offered prayers for the Russian Emperor. In these days all Bulgarians in Eastern Roumelia pray for their Emperor, their Grand Duke Constantine, and the rest of the Imperial family. And such prayers are likely to be offered so long as Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia are artificially separated. We returned home through a Rhodope valley, green as any Devon vale, full of magnificent walnut trees. We had not been in my friend's garden long before the head of the Mohammedans in the village appeared. This man, with his co-religionists, had fled the country during the war. They returned with the peace, only to find their houses destroyed by the Christians. The head man came now to petition my friend to give him more money to rebuild their houses. My friend had already, out of a charitable fund, given each Mohammedan in the village £10 to

rebuild their houses. To the gipsies, who are not wanderers, but stationary in the village, he had only given £6 each to rebuild their houses. The gipsies had rebuilt their houses with £6, while the Turks had not rebuilt their houses with £10. The fact was the Turks had indulged in the luxury of a contractor, and had sat by lazily smoking whilst the Bulgarians built for them. There is much in Eastern Roumelia to remind one of La Fontaine's fable. During the long years of their reign the Turks have been dancing, while the Bulgarians have been improving themselves by education and enriching themselves by commerce. And now that the winter has come, the poor Turk, like the grasshopper of the fable, can only dance. There can be no doubt that, with all his religious fatalism, the Turk must find adversity hard to bear. He has not yet learnt to help himself, and is now for the first time taking lessons in self-help. The President of the Repatriation

Committee, an intelligent Bulgarian, who presides over the committee appointed for bringing back Mohammedan peasants to their homes in Eastern Roumelia, told me that in the Rhodope mountains he had seen Turks hard at work rebuilding their houses. He had never seen such a sight before. The Turkish women, too, he said, were assisting the men in their work with their yashmaks off. This was still more extraordinary, for in Turkey all work is done by men: women take no share whatever in the labour market; custom, which is far stronger than law, dooms them to perpetual idleness; even coffee is made by men. However, there are hopeful signs for the future, which prove that the laziness of the Turk is not incorrigible. Turk and Bulgarian have alike suffered from Turkish misgovernment in the past. Yet, paradoxical as it may sound, the pacha's little finger has fallen on the Christian, while he has scourged with scorpions the Mo-

hammedan subject of the Porte. The Christians, left to themselves, secure from service in the Sultan's army and paying but few taxes, have enjoyed excellent schools, and have been practically governing themselves for the last two hundred years. The Turks, on the contrary, neglected by their own Government, and taught only to be good soldiers, are totally unfit to compete with the Christians in the arts of peace. The future undoubtedly belongs to the Christian Rayah, and not to the Turk. May he merit the epithet, and, by governing with justice and moderation, prove himself worthy of the power with which Providence has entrusted him!

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEKO PACHA.

Philippopolis, September.

"His Excellency is with the Council." However, his Excellency left the council chamber, and saw us in an ante-room. Aleko Pacha is a man of middle height, with a face which I would rather not describe. It is not that his Excellency is an ugly man. It is the uneasy look in his eyes, which proclaim that his mildness of manner can give place to paroxysms of passion. Aleko Pacha shook hands with us in a friendly fashion. We sat down on chairs. There was nothing in our interview to remind us of Kinglake's famous interview with the pacha in "Eothen." In the first place, Aleko Pacha spoke very good Eng-

lish, and, in the next place, his dress and manner were European. He began the conversation in French, when I remarked, "Your Excellency speaks excellent English." With this encouragement Aleko Pacha commenced on the subject of England and Asia Minor. "What are you going to do in Asia Minor?" asked the pacha, and I must say he never waited to be answered. He was very voluble, and we were politely silent. "Your difficulties will come from Constantinople. It is not the inhabitants of Asia Minor that are bad," he said; "they are a most patient and industrious population. If you tell them to make roads, they will give their last penny in taxation, but it is *la société de Constantinople, la société la moins bonne*, which prevents all reform." He spoke in the highest terms of Raouf Pacha and Midhat Pacha, but added that men of integrity and ability were always intrigued against in Constantinople. "Those who stood around the Sultan told him that such men were traitors,

and were working the ruin of his empire." All this was sufficiently remarkable, coming as it did from one who was nominally at least a Turkish pacha. Midhat Pacha, he said, was a man of energy: he must always be doing something; but what can he do now? He prepares his reforms, sends them to Constantinople, and there they are never read. "If an angel were to govern Asia Minor, what could he do if he had to take his orders from Constantinople?" It could not but occur to one that the province which the pacha was really referring to was the province he is endeavouring to govern. Then he spoke of the failure of the Midhat Constitution. They could not get the privileged persons to give up their privileges. "Who can reform the Sultan?" "Ah! yes," replied his Excellency, "who can reform the Sultan? He is a man with the passions of a man, and then there are the ambassadors, one pulling him one way and one another." The pacha saw clearly enough

that good government in Turkey was impossible so long as it is carried on by the foreign ambassadors, who scold the Padishah in turns, and each recommends a different specific for the diseases of the State. Speaking of Eastern Roumelia, he said they only wanted time and difficulties would disappear. "My good friend here," said he, affectionately patting the English Consul-General on the knee, "sometimes discovers things which do not exist; but," he quickly added, "he is *un brave homme, un brave homme.*" Here our interview ended.

We went from the konak of his Excellency to the house of the Exarch. Joseph the Exarch is the head of the Bulgarian Church. The Church of Bulgaria is now independent of the Greek Church of Constantinople. The struggle by which the Bulgarians emancipated their Church is well known, and forms an important part of the history of the Eastern Question. Their long subjection to Greek bishops is one of the many

causes of the ill will Bulgarians bear to Hellenes. But whatever bitterness may exist among his flock, the chief shepherd of the Bulgarians is tolerance and benevolence itself. I have seldom seen so fine-looking a man. His long black beard, his dark eyes, full of expression, his Greek—if I may apply the epithet to a Bulgarian—and noble features, formed a face you would not easily forget. He received us with the most gentle courtesy. The Exarch spoke French. The gentleman who introduced us told his grace that very few Russian bishops spoke French. The Exarch smiled. The head of the Bulgarian Church spoke of the flourishing condition of the Bulgarian peasantry, and concurred with my friend that the Bulgarians had already reached a stage far in advance of the Russians. My friend and the Exarch were of the same opinion, that of all the Slavs the Russians are the most backward. The Exarch thought the inhabitants of Eastern Roumelia would in time be a more

flourishing community than those of Bulgaria proper. He considered them more intelligent and more civilized than their neighbours. He spoke of their want of a Minister of Justice, and expressed a decided opinion that he should be a lawyer and not a layman. The reader may be surprised at the Exarch taking an interest in a subject so foreign to his calling, but he will be still more surprised to learn that his grace began life as a lawyer, and became a priest quite late in life. This may account with some for his courteous bearing and his enlightened opinions. There can be no doubt that the Exarch is a remarkable man. There is no religious community which would not have reason to be proud of the man who is the present head of the Bulgarian Church. We shook hands with the Exarch on taking leave of him. Had this good man given us his blessing, I for one would have valued it.

We went from the house of Joseph the

Exarch to the house of Panarit the Metro, politan. The Exarch is the head of the whole Bulgarian Church. The Metropolitan is the Bishop of Philippopolis. It was an abrupt transition. The Exarch is a courteous, educated gentleman. The Metropolitan is a shrewd and intelligent Bulgarian. The Exarch holds himself aloof from politics and is certainly not friendly to Russia. The Metropolitan is practically the head of the National Church in Philippopolis, and a warm ally of Russia. The Metropolitan only speaks Bulgarian, and his suffragan bishop spoke Russian. Our conversation was carried on through the medium of our English friend. The Metropolitan was pleased that two Englishmen should come and see for themselves what the country was like. I told him I had learnt more of Eastern Roumelia in three days at Philippopolis than I could have learnt from three years' reading in London. He was much struck with this remark. We

spoke of the condition of the Jews in Roumania. "The Jews have mind," said the Metropolitan. He did not approve of their being persecuted, but when we said, "You would give them a vote, then?" the old man replied, "I don't say that." While we were with the Metropolitan, the President of the Repatriation Committee called. This man was a fair specimen of the respectable Bulgarian. He could not, therefore, be expected to be free from prejudices which even enlightened Bulgarians share. He abused the Greeks in no measured terms: "We can live with the Turks, we can live with Jews and Armenians, but we can't live with the Greeks." As an instance of the good feeling now existing between Bulgarian and Turk, he told me that in the Rhodope Mountain Mohammedans and Christians had formed a cordon together to guard the country against Bashi-Bazouks. This good feeling between the rival religions is not restricted to Bulgaria and

Eastern Roumelia. Mr. Blunt, the acting Consul in Adrianople, told me of a Christian village in what is left of European Turkey where the inhabitants not only did not maltreat the Mohammedans on their return after the war, but put them up in their own homes until the Turks had rebuilt their houses. A colonel of the Ottoman Gendarmerie told me that in all the districts he had inspected the Mohammedan population seemed proud of the good relations existing between them and the Christians. But to return to the Metropolitan, he shared to the full the President's dislike of the Greeks. "The Turks and Bulgarians," he said, "could get on very well together if it were not for the intrigues of the Greeks." I was amused at this old intriguer talking of Greek intrigues, when he is himself knee-deep in Russian intrigues. I must not forget to mention that while the President was making his brilliant tirade against the Hellenes, he was all the time vigorously counting

his beads. This religious observance in no way interfered with the exercise of his vituperative powers.

Before leaving Philippopolis, the editor of the *Philippopolis* (the Greek paper published there) and the Greek Consul were both introduced to me. They, too, were not silent on their wrongs. The editor complained that he had been summoned by the authorities to give up the names of the persons from whom he had obtained information respecting the Bulgarian excesses, while the *Maritza*, the Bulgarian newspaper of the town, was allowed to appear week after week full of the most virulent abuse of the Hellenes. A Turk's house in Philippopolis had been broken into and the Turk himself beaten. "The Turk has been charged with taking part in a riot, and why? Because he complained to me," said the editor of the *Philippopolis*, "and not to the Government." There can be little doubt that the Greeks are not fairly treated in Eastern

Roumelia. The electoral districts of Eastern Roumelia have been so mapped out that the Greeks have not a chance of being represented in the Assembly in proportion to their numerical strength. The *Maritza* (Bulgarian) newspaper pointed out a few days ago that a modern Greek was a synonyme for a scamp. On the other hand, the *Philippopolis* is far from friendly to the new Government. Its editor took care to tell me that the amount of Mohammedan property destroyed by Bulgarians in Tatar Bazardjik far exceeded the amount officially reported, but that the Turks were afraid of giving evidence for fear of losing their lives as well as their houses. There are some who think that if both the *Maritza* and the *Philippopolis* were suppressed a step would have been taken in the right direction. The still small voice is certainly not heard in these newspapers. The longer I remain in the East, the more strongly I feel the folly of such words as "philo-Turk" and "philo-

Hellene." Truth does not lie in such convenient phrases. Each race taken apart—Greek, Bulgarian, Turk—has noble qualities. The three races are like an ill-assorted band of music, each separate instrument of which has an agreeable sound, but when played together they only send forth a discordant noise. The jealousies of centuries cannot easily be forgotten, and alas! the enfranchisement of one race means suffering to its brother. Yet Time, the great healer, will heal even the wounds of this distracted land, and the Bulgarian will cease reviling the Greek, and the Greek will no longer despise the Bulgarian. When that day arrives, and this peninsula is no longer the battle-field of European arms, and, what is worse, of European diplomacy, the inhabitants of these fair and historic regions, living happily together, will look back upon the Eastern Question as part of a bloody and remorseless past.

DOES EASTERN ROUMELIA EXIST?

Philippopolis, October.

SINCE the day that Aleko Pacha arrived at Philippopolis, wearing the coat of a Turkish official and a Bulgarian kalpach (a head-dress which he hastily got out of his portmanteau as the train approached Philippopolis), he forfeited the respect of all sensible men. Like the country over which he nominally governs, the pacha is a nondescript. Eastern Roumelia is neither a subject State nor an independent principality. It is neither fish, fowl, nor good red herring. It glories in an Organic Statute, but, like most paper Constitutions, the Organic Statute remains a paper Constitution. Eastern Roumelia seems to have been created as an

exercise-ground for rising diplomats. And certainly, if the courtesy, experience, knowledge, and industry of one man could ensure happiness to a people, the State to which Mr. Thomas Michell is accredited should be happy indeed. If anything could exceed the difficulties of Mr. Michell's position in Eastern Roumelia it is the ability with which he overcomes them. Whenever there is a tale of oppression, Mr. Michell is on the spot to investigate it, and if he can do nothing more, he can wisely distribute the funds which English charity has furnished. The English Commissioner in Eastern Roumelia enjoys the influence which an upright man must always enjoy; but there is another Commissioner there who enjoys something more than moral influence—I mean the Russian Commissioner, Prince Tzeretelew. Between the Prince and our own Commissioner the same sort of harmony exists as between two boys, one of whom is trying to fly a kite and the other to haul it

down. The Organic Statute is the paper kite of the Treaty of Berlin. The Russian wishes to haul it down, while the Englishman wishes to give it a fair trial. However, I will leave the actual rulers of Eastern Roumelia, to say a word or two about the nominal ruler.

Aleko Pacha is, as I mentioned in an earlier letter, a Bulgarian by birth. It is difficult sometimes to say in European Turkey to what nationality a man belongs. For instance, a Bulgarian mother will tell you that one of her sons is a Greek and the other a Bulgarian! Aleko, after passing years in Constantinople by the Hellenic appellation of Vogorides, has now blossomed forth into the full Bulgarian style of Alexander Bogoridi. The Turkish title of pacha has been thrown aside with the fez, and the title Aleko affects is that of "*Le prince gouverneur.*" He considers himself the Prince of a tributary State. The Russians and those who flatter him address him as "*Votre altesse,*"

although the only title he is entitled to is "Your Excellency." He is in fact a man inordinately vain. I will give one instance. The 30th of August (old style) is the saint day of Alexander Nevski and the name day of the present Czar. The reigning Prince of Bulgaria also bears the name of Alexander. The day happens to be the birthday of Aleko Pacha. On the 30th day of August of this year Philippopolis was *en fête*. Every Bulgarian in the town was rejoicing on the name day of the Liberator. It was also the day of the young Prince whose subjects they were so anxious to become. It was quite clear that the gymnasts got up the whole affair as a Russian demonstration. A few days afterwards, Aleko published a list of the official holidays to be kept throughout the year. First came Christian holidays; secondly, political holidays. These latter were only two:—

"26th July.—Birthday of his Majesty the Sultan."

"30th August.—My name day."

The Governor is, I believe, a well-meaning man. He is neither corrupt, nor cruel, nor licentious, which is more than you can say of all pachas; but he is a weak man, utterly unfit to rule in Eastern Roumelia. It was with good reason that the Russians refused to accept Rustem Pacha as Governor of Eastern Roumelia. Rustem Pacha is a strong man, and would have restored order to the country. He has much to be grateful for to the Russians, for it is they who have sent him to peaceful and beautiful Lebanon; but a country equally beautiful and with a population far more civilized suffers. Under Aleko's helpless sceptre the Russians work their own sweet will in Eastern Roumelia. The story of the cutting down of the Bulgarian flag in Philippopolis has been already told, but the secret history connected with it is not known in England. It illustrates the character of Aleko better than a string of epithets. The

national flag of Bulgaria floated in front of the house of the pacha. This was, of course, contrary to the Organic Statute and most distasteful to the Turks. Orders came from Constantinople to cut down this obnoxious flag. But Aleko holds his post for five years, and is practically irremovable by the Sultan. It is not the Porte he fears, but the National Committee. He is a timid man, and is afraid of being assassinated by the Bulgarians if he acts in opposition to their wishes. So the Bulgarian flag continued to float in front of the Turkish konak. One morning, the English Consul-General, to his great surprise, found the flag gone. He at once called on Aleko Pacha, and congratulated him on the firmness he had displayed. He assured him that his conduct should be brought to the notice of her Majesty's Government. The pacha, in a great state of nervousness, said he was delighted to hear his friend speak as he did, but begged

him not to let the matter appear in the Blue-books. The pacha disliked nothing more than a Blue-book. The Consul accordingly wrote a "confidential" letter on the subject to his Government. What was his surprise and indignation when, a few days later, he learnt that the Bulgarian flag had been hauled down, not by Aleko Pacha, who so modestly assumed the credit of it, but by four young men who had been dining! Facts of this kind require no comment. Not to confuse the English reader, I may as well finish the story of the national flag. After the aforesaid incident, it was again hoisted on its pole, but did not long remain. Owing to the remonstrances of the Western Powers, General Strecker hacked down the flagstaff. General Strecker, who succeeded Vitalis Pacha as commander of the Bulgarian Militia, is a Prussian, and does his duty like a man. However, his utter want of sentiment for the Bulgarian flag has deeply hurt the feelings of the people.

Aleko Pacha is not likely to become popular. He does not entertain. He appears to have but two objects in view—to escape assassination, of which the English Consul-General is constantly assuring him there is not the slightest danger, and to save as much money as he can out of his £4000 a year. But these are trifles. I will give a few data from which the reader may draw his own conclusions whether the results of Aleko Pacha's rule in Eastern Roumelia have been beneficial or not.

The Christians (?), it is well known, are in many parts of Eastern Roumelia maltreating the Mohammedans and recklessly destroying their property. I will mention a few cases that have happened quite lately. A fortnight ago some Turks were returning to their native village (Rhydyrdjyk) with a pass from the Repatriation Committee, when they were met by a party of gymnasts. The leader of the gymnasts ordered the Turks into two separate

rows, the men in the one and the women in the other. The gymnasts then searched them for arms, splitting up their mattresses and carrying away twenty-eight pieces of clothing, which they alleged to belong to Bulgarians. Sometimes there is a method in their madness. The Bulgarians of Sonitchourka destroyed one room of a Mohammedan house, and left the other room intact, stating that they had now "squared their account." In another village the Bulgarians have pulled down all the Mohammedan houses, and with the materials built houses for themselves in fields which belonged to the Turks. Many other instances of oppression could be given. There are thoughtful men in Eastern Roumelia who do not think this state of things can last, and say that, though the Mohammedans have been deprived of arms, they will rise and defend themselves, if it be only with the stones, against their Christian oppressors.

Tatar Bazardjik used to be a flourishing

Turkish town. In this town alone the Bulgarians have gutted fourteen mosques and five schools. Out of three thousand Turkish houses in Tatar Bazardjik only three hundred remain uninjured. The question I am now considering is not whether the Mohammedans are ill treated by the Christians, but whether they are worse treated under Aleko's rule than they were during the Russian occupation. The question is best answered by the following table :—During the Russian occupation from 15th January, 1877, to July, 1879, Turkish houses burnt in Tatar Bazardjik, 64; destroyed, 30; injured, 88: total, 182. During Aleko Pacha's rule, July-August, 1879—Turkish houses burnt in Tatar Bazardjik, 114; destroyed, 173; injured, 469: total, 756. So that the insecurity of Turkish property has alarmingly increased since Aleko Pacha became the Sultan's Vicegerent in Eastern Roumelia. Many think that nothing can save the country from anarchy but armed occupation by the

Powers. While not assenting to this view of the question, I do not think the present state of things can last. There are two ways of pacifying the troubles of Eastern Roumelia. Either we can throw over the Treaty of Berlin by incorporating Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria or we should insist upon a man—such as Raouf Pacha—being appointed Governor who would see that the Treaty of Berlin was carried out. But let us not blink our eyes to the fact that a strong Government means hanging all the uneasy spirits. At present we neither abandon nor carry out the Treaty of Berlin. The result is that the Bulgarians are practically in a state of revolt against the Organic Statute, which all the time is a dead letter in Eastern Roumelia.

TURKS OF THE CAPITAL.

Constantinople, October.

THE journey from Adrianople to Constantinople is tedious and dull. We were travelling for twelve hours without seeing anything that was either interesting or beautiful. In Turkey there are no railway porters, and, if there were such beings, they would be far too lethargic to call out the name of a station. You may, therefore, enter Constantinople by rail without knowing that you have passed San Stefano. If the adage, "The nearer the bone the sweeter the meat," be a true one, the Treaty of San Stefano, concluded in a suburb of Constantinople, should, of all treaties between the two Powers, have been the most destructive of Turkey and the

most favourable for Russia. It is at least an open question whether England acted wisely in setting that treaty aside. The Treaty of San Stefano would have made two strong Powers—Bulgaria and Turkey. Paradoxical as it may appear, the more you leave of Turkey in Europe the more you weaken the Ottoman Empire. Thiers said, in 1854, that he hoped to see the Austrians in Rome and Naples, for when France declared war against Austria not one Austrian would leave Italy save as a prisoner of war. Prince Gortschakoff might make the same remark of Turkey. He might well wish to see the Turk in Philippopolis, as, in the event of Russia declaring war against Turkey, not a Turk would leave Eastern Roumelia alive—the Bulgarians would kill them all. After all his declarations in favour of the Eastern Christians, the Czar was compelled to draw up the Treaty of San Stefano, but his wily Chancellor must have rubbed his hands when England refused

to sanction it. A large and strong Bulgaria, such as that created by the Treaty of San Stefano, would be a death-blow to Russia's intrigues in the East. The Treaty of Berlin has given a fresh lease of life to this troublesome Eastern Question, which appears so interesting to diplomatists that they will not allow it to expire. But though the politicians of the West are endeavouring to prop up the dominion of the Sultan in Europe, the truth is beginning to dawn on the minds of the Turks themselves.

The Governor of Broussa has lately been beautifying that town. When asked why he was taking so unusual a course, the pacha replied that he was getting the old capital ready to receive his Sovereign. Broussa was the capital of the Ottoman Empire before the Osmanli crossed into Europe. There was sense as well as wit in his reply. It would be a happy day for the Turk when Broussa is

once more visited by the Sultan. Then perhaps the rich and fertile land that stretches from Smyrna to Bagdad may be thought worthy of some attention. Yet it must not be supposed that Turkey would abandon her European provinces and her European capital to a general scramble. I have had several conversations with General Klapka since I have been here. The Hungarian veteran knows the Turk better, perhaps, than any other European. He is the Turk's friend, and the Turk has proved himself the friend of the Hungarian.

I may remind the English reader that, in the opinion of so high an authority as Count Moltke, General Klapka is one of the greatest strategical geniuses of the century, and, by the Turks at least, General Klapka's opinions are deferentially received. General Klapka told me that he was always urging on his Turkish friends the necessity of their giving complete autonomy to their European provinces. The

Turks, he said, could not continue to govern in Europe as they did in Asia. The provinces enjoying autonomy should be four in number—Macedonia, Thrace, Albania, and Eastern Roumelia. Although I cannot applaud the creation of Eastern Roumelia as a masterpiece of European diplomacy, I believe that if Turkey were voluntarily to grant autonomy to Macedonia, Thrace, and Albania, the results of such a magnanimous policy would prove very different from what we now see in Eastern Roumelia. The dependence of those provinces upon Turkey would not be the sham dependence of Eastern Roumelia—a dependence which exists only in Blue-books. The talk of keeping up the suzerainty of the Sultan in a country like Eastern Roumelia, where the Sultan's flag cannot be hoisted with impunity, is a mockery, and a mockery that the better class of Turks feel very keenly. They regard such language as an insulting phrase. But if autonomy were

granted to what remains of European Turkey, the inhabitants of those countries would accept it gratefully, and would not abuse their liberty. Loyal they would certainly become to the Sultan, and, wedged in by friendly provinces, London itself would not be more safe from Russian aggression than the city of the Sultan. The Turks, said General Klapka, must retain Constantinople, not only that Europe may enjoy peace, but as a depôt from which European civilization may penetrate into Asia Minor. The misfortune is, that the civilization which comes here is of such a very doubtful character that one can scarcely regret it takes some time to filter into Asia. General Klapka looks to the projected railway from Scutari to Bagdad as a stream that will fertilize Asia Minor. Others regard the reports which English Consuls are making in Asia Minor as the commencement of the good work. There can be no doubt that both the railway

and the consular reports are excellent in themselves. The question is whether the Turkish Government will allow either railroad or reports to be carried out or acted upon. But how long you have to wait for the answer! To-morrow and to-morrow comes, and still no decided answer. A pacha is far too polite to say "No." Each day you see him, he grows more polite and more indefinite. A European promoter here, who is now on the eve of success, told me he would never have undertaken the task had he known what two years' bribery and intriguing meant.

All Turks are capable of taking bakshish. Beyond this, they seem incapable of anything, whether good or bad, unless compelled to do it. Under their lethargic rule even the sacred edifices of their religion are crumbling to ruin. The Turks could at one time build noble mosques; they now seem unable to repair them. Everything in Turkey appears aged.

The buildings built not fifty years ago look as if they had been built by Solymon the Magnificent. The men, as is well known, are prematurely old. The women—I do not speak of houris, with whom I am not acquainted—hobble about in their uncouth garments, wrinkled and tanned at an age when an English girl is leaving Girton College. Speaking of Girton College, I will give a practical illustration of female education in Turkey. An English lady whom I know is on the most friendly terms with one of the best and most enlightened of the pachas; this pacha, though a Mohammedan, is the husband of one wife, and my English friend is on the most intimate terms with the pacha's wife. The English lady begged —— Pacha to allow her to give his daughter French lessons. The pacha thanked her with all the politeness which distinguishes him, but declined her offer. He could not hear of his daughter learning French, for she might

marry a Turk who could not speak French, and what would be the consequence of a union in which the wife was better educated than the husband? This English lady has often asked the pacha's wife and daughter to her home, promising that both her husband and her footmen shall be kept out of the house, but her invitation has always been declined. And this, we must remember, is a liberal and reforming pacha.

I was speaking to a distinguished diplomat at Therapia on the wonderful powers of stagnation which the Turks possess. Yes, he said, but things are better than they were. The Turks were retrogressing; now they are simply stagnant. They have now at least a National Ministry, which will not attempt to lead the country into strange paths. The gossips of Pera do not spare the late Ministers of the Sultan. They charge Kairidim Pacha, the late Grand Vizier, with corruption on a colossal

scale. He is reported to have lent the Sultan £20,000, and they say he aspired to become the Khedive of Egypt. I have spoken to men entitled to speak on the subject, and they have made very light of this irresponsible chatter. They did not consider the late Grand Vizier a corrupt man. On the contrary, they quite concurred in the high opinion which the English papers have formed of him. Kairidim Pacha is rich, and has sprung from nothing; but there is no evidence of his having amassed wealth by illicit means. Kairidim Pacha is a typical pacha. He neither knows his parents nor his nationality, although he is pleased to call himself a Circassian and went to the Caucasus to discover his parents. It is needless to state that his search was fruitless. Kairidim Pacha is, I believe, no more a Circassian than I am. In appearance the late Grand Vizier might pass for a butler in a respectable English family. Short and stout, with shiny face,

mutton-chop whiskers, and a wig, he looks respectable. There is now no Grand Vizier. All power is centred in Ghazi Osman Pacha, the Minister for War. Osman Pacha, whom his flatterers may compare to our own Duke of Wellington, resembles that great man in nothing but his incapacity for politics. A Turkish pacha said to me in Adrianople that the defence of Plevna was a national calamity, for it had created Osman Pacha. This was a remarkable speech for a Turk to make, yet it was strictly and entirely true. Osman Pacha has, indeed, been a most fortunate adventurer. Plevna made Osman, and not Osman Plevna. The earthworks of Plevna were thrown up by Tewfik Pacha; yet Europe recognizes in Osman Pacha alone the hero of Plevna. Of all his companions-in-arms Osman alone is still in favour with the Seraglio. The brave Mehemet Ali was murdered by the Albanians. Suleiman Pacha is an exile. Ghazi Muktar Pacha is under

a cloud. Raouf Pacha is a provincial Governor. What is to be regretted, as General Klapka said to me, is that Osman should have returned from St. Petersburg, not with European, but with Russian ideas. His enforced visit to the Russian capital has only rooted him in his bigoted and reactionary opinions. He is, undoubtedly, the best-hated man in Turkey. They charge him with keeping back the soldiers' pay, while he is himself in the pay of Russia. Officers and soldiers alike detest the man who grows rich while they are penniless. It must be remembered that in Constantinople a pacha, be he as chaste as ice and as pure as snow, does not escape calumny. A pacha may begin his career with the most honourable intentions, yet if no credit is given to his intentions, and he is always spoken of as a beast of prey, he may end by becoming one. You must, therefore, allow for much exaggeration in the abuse so liberally heaped

on Osman Pacha, for a pacha, like the tchinovnik in Russia, is the devil of the East.

Yet there can be no doubt that both army and navy in Turkey are unpaid. Turkey, you would have thought, is a country so rich in mines and grain that she never would have contracted a national debt. Wretchedly as her taxes are managed, they pour into the national exchequer an annual revenue of fifteen millions. The same taxes could produce an annual revenue of twenty millions. The question is, where do the fifteen millions percolate to? The answer of the foreigner is — the Seraglio. No doubt under some Sultans the whole system of government was but a mill to furnish pleasures to the monarch, but those entitled to express an opinion on the subject hold a better opinion of the present Sultan. He has his faults, but he is not a voluptuary like some of his predecessors. Who, then, receive the fifteen millions? The soldiers are well fed,

but beyond their daily rations they receive nothing from a grateful Government. The pay of most of the officers is eighteen months in arrear.

I am writing this in a railway carriage. A Turkish captain is sitting near me eating his breakfast. I should like to know the English officer who would be satisfied with dry bread and a cigarette for breakfast, and yet the Englishman might learn something of this young Turk who fought at Schipka. The other occupants of this second-class carriage are not without interest, and the occupants (if any) of a first-class carriage on an Ottoman line are quite as dull as those on an English line. That fat, comfortable old man with a clean shaven face and a partially shaven head (like his cousin the Chinee) is a wealthy sheep farmer of Adrianople. His belt is full of daggers and pistols, but he is kindly as well as cleanly, and before he goes he makes a

present of some grapes to the young officer. This piece of patronage is not resented. That little man next to him, dressed in the European style, who speaks a few sentences in English, and is proud of his French, is an Armenian. He is in the Turkish service, and let us trust in Turkish pay, but throughout the journey he loses no opportunity of pointing out to me the stupidity and ignorance of his employers. He is servile and deferential to the bey by his side, while he is telling me in French of the frightful oppression his countrymen suffer from the Turks. But I will dismiss the Armenian with the remark that all his statements were proved to be inaccurate when not absolutely false. The Armenian, I may mention, formed no exception to the universal rule; he cordially disliked the Greeks. The bey, or colonel, sitting opposite to me is a kind and worthy man. Even the Armenian, who depreciated everything and everybody,

said that it was a shame that a man like that should neither be paid nor promoted. The bey is a good fighter, but has no interest at the Seraskierate. I have seen a good deal of the Turkish officers of late, and I can bear witness to their courteous manners and obliging ways. The Turkish officer goes out of his way to be agreeable, and I much regret that my ignorance of the Turkish language should prevent my entering into conversation with him. The patience, the loyalty, and the bravery of "the unspeakable Turk" are well known. The Government dare not disband the army, but short of this they work their will with that dumb tool. Not that the Turkish soldier never murmurs; but when he murmurs he is easily pacified. The troops at Adrianople grumbled at not being paid. Raouf Pacha summoned them together, explained that times were hard in Constantinople, and asked them to wait a little longer for their pay. The grumblers were

instantly pacified. The misfortune is that the excellent stuff of which the poor Turk is made should not be improved and strengthened by education. The consequence is that so few Turks can withstand the temptation which besets high places in Turkey. "Make the honest, hard-working Turkish soldier a pacha," said one who knew the Turk well, "and you will find him as bad as any other pacha."

It is her own corruption, and not Russia, that threatens Turkey with destruction. Officials who would be honest under an honest Government become dishonest under Turkish rule. Men must live; and when they receive no salary they demand bakshish. A venal Turk is not only a bad man: he is a bad Mohammedan. The noble tenets of the Koran are not made for the official Turk; and nothing jars on me more than the number of wine-drinking Turks who fill the restaurants of Pera. It is generally said, and I believe it is an un-

doubted fact, that one of the best pachas Turkey possesses is so drunk at night as to be incapable of transacting business. A spirit called mastic is almost universally used as a digestive tonic before dinner, the Turks drawing a distinction between this and the wine they are forbidden to drink. As in all other countries, so in Turkey, the poor are the most religious. I have seen the sunburnt face of a poor officer grow blacker still at the sight of a fat merchant washing his chicken down with draughts of medoc. The pacha drinks his coffee in his private room during the fast of Ramazan. The prejudices of the vulgar have still to be respected. The Prophet himself is said to have felt an aversion for the Osmanli, then an obscure mountain tribe; and certainly at this day they reflect but little credit on the faith. The religion of the Koran has a great future, especially in civilizing Africa, but in Europe it can no longer be called a civilizing creed.

Turkey in Europe no more brings strength to the Mohammedan religion than the temporal power of the Popes brought strength to Catholicism. A story is told of Mahomet that one day he was surprised by an enemy asleep and far from his camp. "Who will save you now, Mahomet?" said Durthur, as he stood over him with his drawn sword. "God." Durthur was so struck by the eloquence of this grand reply that he dropped his sword and became the Prophet's warmest friend. If Russia were again to stand over Stamboul with her sword drawn, and Europe were not to interfere, could the Turk make the same appeal to that Being whom his Prophet taught him to worship? A feeling of despondency came over me even when a city stretched before me that baffled description.

"Surgit amari aliquid medio de fonte leporum."

The tourist, enchanted with the view, may

pronounce Constantinople the most glorious city the world has ever seen, and if he says so he only speaks the truth. But for the thoughtful graver thoughts must rise. Though gazing on the Golden Horn, you must be sad, for, like Jugurtha, you can exclaim over a greater Rome, "A city for sale, which only awaits a purchaser!"

THE CITY OF THE SULTAN.

Constantinople, October.

THE entrance by rail to the great cities of Europe gives but a faint idea of the magnitude or beauty of the city you are entering. The necessities of life require the planting of cabbages and market gardens to take the place of *arcs de triomphe*. The entrance to Stamboul forms no exception to the rule. Yet the railway makes its way through ancient walls, by the Seven Towers, and close to that Golden Gate through which the conqueror made his triumphal entrance into Constantinople. The Turk came as a conqueror, but, unable to assimilate with the conquered, the conqueror has himself been conquered. Like a second Duncan, he lies murdered by his own servants. Greeks and

Armenians manage his finances, Bulgarians rule his fairest provinces, and renegade pachas lead his armies. It is a fact worthy of notice that the Treaty of Berlin has deprived Turkey in Europe of her richest soil. The beautiful and fertile valley of the Tundscha has been given to Eastern Roumelia. All that remains of the Ottoman Empire in Europe is a wretched chalky plain, with the exception of the land watered by the Maritza. The Maritza valley produces the best wine and tobacco of the East. Nor is Turkish agriculture likely to be improved by the long-established custom of leaving as a sheep-walk a vast strip of land stretching from the Balkans to the Bosphorus. Across these valleys and plains the Christian rayah used formerly to drive his flocks to winter in Asia, and with the spring he would return to his home in the Balkans. Probably no other country in the world offers such an instance of patriarchal living.

That man must, indeed, be dead to feeling, who does not feel when he passes under the crumbling walls of Constantinople. He will remember the words of the conqueror in the hour of victory, "The spider hath woven his web in the imperial palace, and the owl hath sung his watch-song on the towers of Afrasiab." Although Gibbon has given a different construction to this famous quotation, comparing it to Scipio's exclamation over the sack of Carthage, yet the distich may be viewed in the light of a prophecy of the blight which Turkish rule was to bring on some of the fairest and most historic regions of the earth. Now we are approaching what is, perhaps, the fairest and most historic piece of ground in all the world, for we are entering the City of the Sultan. The blue waters of the Sea of Marmora stretch before us, while above us, against the clear air, stand out the quaint kitchen chimneys of the Seraglio. Women are no longer

sewn up in sacks and thrown into the sea. The train rushes past the place of female execution. The tower in which the Sultan's guilty wives were imprisoned is now a lighthouse. Thus Time brings its revenges.

If a writer friendly to the Turks might quote in defence of their pachas the adage, "*Corruptio optimi pessima,*" the adage might with still more appropriateness be applied to Turkish weather. What can be more breezy than a Turkish morning, when mists festoon the mountain, and even the parched plain is bright with the rays of the sun? What can be more serene than a Turkish evening, when the landscape looks peace and the sun sets in a sky of gold? But if a fine day on the Bosphorus is unrivalled, a rainy day in this delightful region is simply detestable. It poured with rain the first day we were in Constantinople. Nothing can describe the depression of spirits from which we suffered. It was worse than the intermittent

fever. Even the curs of Pera looked more lank and more wolfish as they wandered among heaps of offal. Constantinople has two aspects —brightness and filth. No picture can give us a just idea of an Eastern city. The artist only gives us the brilliant colouring; he gives us no notion of the squalor which accompanies, and perhaps sets off, the gorgeous colouring. In the Seraglio both elements are combined. There we find the most charming Arabesque architecture facing a piece of waste land that would disgrace the lowest slum in the suburbs of London; rooms furnished in the most elaborate Louis Quatorze style, while a few yards from the window a dustheap pollutes the atmosphere. Yet were the Turks a thousand times more slovenly than they are, they could not destroy that glorious view overlooking Europe and Asia. But on a rainy day the lofty tower of the Seraskierate is scarcely visible, the minarets of the Ahmed-

yah are blurred with rain, and a mist overhangs the dome of St. Sofia. I felt that I might as well have been in Birmingham. I actually found myself discussing the merits of booked letter receipts with the postmaster of the English Post-office. The manner in which each of the Great Powers has its own post-office in Pera is a curious instance of the *imperium in imperio* of that foreign surveillance and distrust of things Turkish. I do not know what we should say if the Russians had their own post-office in London. To mend matters on this rainy day, I called on a Radical M.P. This gentleman seemed quite satisfied to derive his information from consular dinner-tables, and by no means approved of investigating for himself, in springless carts, the state of the country. I told him a little of what I had seen in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. "Oh," he said, "the Bulgarians are compelled to keep up the gymnasts, for fear of the Turks invading their

country!" I presume the honourable member will relate to his constituents his personal experiences; and the *Times* may have an article on the importance of our legislators seeing for themselves the lie of the land. I did not tell the M.P. that the gymnasts were more for offence than defence, more for molesting their Mohammedan neighbours and overawing Aleko Pacha than for defending the country against an invading army. The fact is that if the Sultan were to exercise his legal right of garrisoning the Balkans, and the Turkish troops were to enter Eastern Roumelia—I do not say one word on the morality or the wisdom of such a step—both local militia and Russian gymnast would be swept away like so many playthings. A Turkish pacha made a speech to this effect to me, and I believe he only spoke the truth. The Turkish soldier has never had a fair chance. Give him an English general—I will not say a Marlborough or a Wellington, but simply an

honest man—and he will be invincible. I have talked with both Englishmen and Turks who had served either as soldiers or diplomatists in the late war, and they were all agreed that there had been foul play. The Turkish soldier was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was sold and butchered. I repeat he was never fairly beaten by the Russians. And so the best soldier in Europe strolls about in his ragged uniform without even a medal or a piastre of pay. Who can describe the Turkish pacha? He is without rhetoric the bloodsucker of Turkey, and in a country of sham vampires he is a vampire in very deed and truth. An English officer holding an important post in Turkey told me no words could describe the jealousy which one pacha feels for another pacha. Theirs is no honourable ambition—

> "Certari ingenio, contendere nobilitate
> Noctes atque dies niti præstante labore,
> Ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri."

But on the contrary, theirs is a vile determination to pull down others to their own level. The distrust which one pacha feels for his brother pacha he feels for all his subordinates. Raouf Pacha himself looks after every department of his government at Adrianople. So wide a field is too great a labour even for an able man. The want of confidence a pacha feels in his own subordinates is one of the causes of Turkish misgovernment. Even a good governor—and Raouf is one—cannot do the work of fifty honest men. What, then, must be the condition of the province whose pacha is corrupt and wicked?

It does not always rain in Constantinople, and when it clears up you are repaid for a whole winter's downfall. Constantinople, as far as situation goes, is a celestial city. Its inhabitants seem to come from a very different quarter. It is, in fact, an asylum for the roguery of the East and of the West. As for

its municipal government, that, too, is not in the hands of the angels. Yet, to do the Turks justice, it is not Stamboul, but Pera, handed over to a Christian municipality, which is an offence to all the senses. Stamboul has broad streets and tramways, but Pera has narrow and fetid alleys. There is only one man of energy on the municipality of Pera, and he is Mr. Black, an Englishman. I should advise the tourist, instead of going to Pera with its high charges and high smells, to cross over into Asia. I stayed with some friends at Fanarkeui (the village of the lighthouse). There, seated among the ruins of a temple of Venus, on one side I had the Prinkipe Islands, and Mount Olympus towering in the far background, and on the other I looked over a sea of glass to the towers and minarets of Constantinople. It is thus the imperial city can be enjoyed. It is thus the spirit of the past can be drunk in and hopes for the future be gathered. If you wish to grow sick

and tired even of Constantinople, hand yourself over to a guide, and rush with him from mosque to mosque and from museum to museum. This is not the way to enjoy the imperial city. Yet there are some sights that should be seen; such a sight is the Sultan's state visit to the mosque. On our way to this state ceremony we passed the Dolmabagchih, where the great Elchi had his famous interview with Abdool Medjid. It was in this palace, where the lapping of the Bosphorus can be heard, that the ambassador of England, stooping over the table, whispered in the ear of the pale Sultan that he was authorized on an emergency to summon the English fleet from Malta. The Crimean war was the outcome of that interview.

The Sultans of Turkey go to church, as is usual and proper with sovereigns. The Sultan of to-day goes to mosque like his predecessors, but unlike them he is afraid of his life, and sneaks into a little mosque not a stone's throw from

his garden gate. The reigning Sultan lives at Yildiz, the "Star" Palace; the deposed Sultan lives at Chiragau. Only a road divides them. Abdul Hamid takes care to keep Murad IV. well in view. The poor lunatic must have heard the bursts of martial music as troop after troop marched up and formed square to guard his brother. I have seldom seen such big men as the African guard, a magnificent troop of negroes. It was pouring with rain, but the scene around us was far too interesting for us to pay attention to the weather. When Parthian, Mede, and Elamite heard the Apostles speak each in his own tongue, they did not form so motley a gathering as the crowd that throngs Stamboul. Here you see the smart Albanian with his belt of weapons, the grave Persian with his hat of black astrachan, the Turk from distant Asia with his woollen kalpach, the Circassian braided and big with his long coat fluted with cartridges, the Armenian

dandy, the tall Tunisian with his Arab cloak around him, and the Softa distinguished by the white turban he wears around the fez. I certainly looked with respect on the Softas as the only class in Turkey who could venture on a revolution. The Sultan was not punctual. A brougham with some of his Sultanas preceded him. No sooner did the carriage containing these houris draw up than two eunuchs instantly placed themselves in front of the window. These wretched beings are the symbol of wealth in Stamboul. A rich Turk keeps eunuchs as a rich Englishman keeps gamekeepers, and the attention which an English gentleman pays to his preserves is very similar to the attention which a Turk gives to his harem. The public derive about the same pleasure and profit from both. Mr. St. Clair says, in his book on Bulgaria, that the whole time he was in Constantinople he knew only one pacha who kept a harem, and he was a renegade. I can only

say that Mr. St. Clair's acquaintance amongst pachas must have been limited. It is true that such well-known pachas as Raouf, Midhat, and Osman are the husbands of one wife, although they are Mohammedans; but they are exceptions. Monogamy is a species of civilization not popular with wealthy Turks.

At last the Sultan came. A feeble cheer arose, a pale, bearded face, a graceful wave of the hand, and the Sultan had entered the mosque. The officers who surrounded him lost no time in putting him out of harm's way. Since the attempt to assassinate him, the Sultan has grown more nervous than before. As an instance of the amusing precautions now taken, spectators are not allowed to stand up in their carriages to see the Sultan pass. A zaptieh tried to put me down, as if I had designs on the life of the Sultan, but I asserted my right to do what I liked in my own carriage. I was speaking to a distinguished diplomat about the

Sultan, when he surprised me by the high opinion he entertained about him. The Sultan, he said, was the best-mannered sovereign he had ever known. "I will not say that my interviews with the Sultan lead to satisfactory results, but they always leave on my mind an agreeable impression." He spoke of the intelligence of the Sultan. "The Sultan is, of course, an uneducated man, as all must be who have received a harem education, but he has an extensive knowledge of affairs. There is not a part of his empire nor a department of the State about which he does not know something. Indeed," said the diplomat, "he takes too great an interest in public affairs, for he will look after everything himself." I heard, therefore, to my surprise—and from a gentleman in constant and direct communication with the Sultan—that Abdul Hamid, instead of being a voluptuary, is a species of George III. upon the throne. He aspires to be a patriot king. On

one occasion he made rather a fine speech to my friend. "Men say that I am a coward, but when the hour of danger arrives I will lead my people and die for my country." Unfortunately, the best proof of the Sultan's want of courage is his retention of Osman Pacha as Minister for War. The Sultan thinks that his life is in danger, but that as long as he retains Osman in office he is safe. This is in itself as short-sighted as it is selfish. Osman Pacha is the best-hated man in Turkey, and nothing makes the Sovereign more unpopular than his blind adherence to Osman Pacha. So hopeless do affairs appear at Stamboul that you turn away from politics with a stronger feeling than relief. Yet, who would be so rash as to attempt to describe Constantinople itself? Of all painters, Turner alone would be worthy of depicting it on canvas; and no writer, be he as gorgeous as De Quincey or as statuesque as Landor, could give you a faint description of it in words.

I have visited many capitals. I have seen Moscow from the Sparrow Hills, Stockholm from the Mossebick, Vienna from St. Stephen's, yet I have seen nothing that can compare with this city of the Bosphorus. If we could collect all that is most beautiful in the other capitals of Europe we could not then create a second Constantinople. As I looked from the Tower of Pera over the Golden Horn, over Stamboul, prickly with minarets and encircled with walls now "nodding to their fall," I did homage to the imperial city, and confessed that it alone was worthy of being the capital of the East and of the West. I took no heed of time as I gazed on this enchanting prospect. The sun went slowly down behind the Suleimanyeh with its grand dome; behind the Mosque of Tulips it sank into the Sea of Marmora; and a few flakes of golden cloud lay floating over the city of the Sultan.

ACROSS THE SCHIPKA.

Tirnova, October.

IF a good map of Turkey be turned to, the junction of Tirnova will be noticed midway on the railway between Adrianople and Philippopolis. From this little station—not the ancient capital of Bulgaria—a branch line took me to Jamboli. At Tirnova junction I was already in Eastern Roumelia, and the police and railway officials bore more or less a Russian appearance. From Tirnova a train runs twice a week by Baron Hirsch's wonderfully crooked line to Yeni Sagra. Baron Hirsch was paid by the kilomètre, and the number of curves that have sprung from this arrangement are simply amazing. We were now approaching the battle-fields of the late war,

and every village showed some traces of its devastation. Eski Sagra is a village about twenty miles south-west of Yeni Sagra. At Eski Sagra, as all the world knows, Raouf Pacha was beaten, not by General Skobeleff, but by Suleiman Pacha. The Russians, when they first crossed the Balkans, attacked Raouf Pacha with overpowering forces. Suleiman Pācha was in the neighbourhood with an army still larger than that of General Skobeleff. He heard the roar of the artillery, he received messages from Raouf urgently asking for assistance, but he did not allow one soldier to march forward until Raouf's contingent had been utterly routed by the Russians. Then he advanced, and by force of numbers beat General Skobeleff back. He did not, however, press his victory, but remained in Eski Sagra while Skobeleff slowly retreated to Yeni Sagra. As for poor Raouf, he went back to Constantinople, loudly complaining of his wrongs; but no one paid much attention

to him then, for Suleiman seemed successful. This was the first act in a long course of treachery which proved to Suleiman's adopted country a veritable tragedy. When I reached Yeni Sagra, I was present at the examination which takes place whenever a Turk returns to his home in Eastern Roumelia. This examination is not a mere custom-house inspection. Every little packet, however small, is opened to see whether weapons are concealed in it. The person is also examined. One old Turk, scarcely strong enough to carry a musket, smiled feebly when the Bulgarian gendarme suspiciously felt his whole person. The Turks seem to bear all the indignities they are now subjected to with an indifference which some reproach as lethargy, but which might be called philosophy. Before the war, Yeni Sagra was a mixed village; but since the war, the Christians, whose houses had been destroyed by the Turks, have seized the houses of the Turks, and at

present refuse to give them up. It is not a fact that the Mohammedans in Eastern Roumelia are not allowed to sell their property. Our Greek interpreter, whom we nicknamed "Luxury," gravely informed me that if a Mohammedan wished to leave Eastern Roumelia he had not the option of selling his land, but that the same was forfeited to the Government. This is the way in which false statements creep about and mislead persons who are only too ready to be misled. If I were to tell half the facts this Greek related, my letter would indeed be a traveller's tale. The Mohammedans in Eastern Roumelia, like their Christian neighbours, may sell their lands. The Bulgarians complain that the Turks try to sell their lands twice over!

Eastern Roumelia is a new country, and, consequently, when the Government posts are not filled by foreigners they are filled by men suddenly exalted from a low position in life. Most of the *préfets* were schoolmasters before the war.

The *sous-prefet* and the innkeeper at Yeni Sagra were both guards on the railway line. The official is a Bulgarian, the innkeeper a Montenegrin—hence the promotion of the official. He now rides a good horse, is saluted by his former companions on the line, and is present at the searching of the poor Turks for weapons. The *sous-préfet* speaks no language but his own, and is despised by my friend the Greek, who can speak half a dozen. Yeni Sagra was decorated with flags when I was there in anticipation of a visit from "le Prince Gouverneur." No one speaks of Aleko by his legal but Turkish appellation of pacha. I need hardly say that not a single Turkish flag was displayed in the village, though there were any number of Bulgarian flags. I may mention here, what is generally talked about in Eastern Roumelia, that the wife of Aleko Pacha looks forward to her son being the Prince of the united provinces of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia. The poor Prince of

Bulgaria is, I suppose, to die young. The wife of Aleko Pacha is spoken of as a clever and intriguing woman. Her ambition reminds me of a story told of Madame M'Mahon. When the Shah of Persia visited Paris, he pointed to the Marshal's son and heir, and made same polite remark about the young man. "Yes," said the President's wife, with tears in her eyes, "he is the hope of France."

From Yeni Sagra a rough road over the mountains leads to the Tundscha valley. The valley through which the Tundscha river flows is the most beautiful in Turkey. The soil of the Tundscha valley is as rich as the richest soil of Buckinghamshire. The sides of the mountains are clothed with the rose, the plum, and the vine. To call it a Turkish Arcadia is to give it a fancy name. It is indeed a goodly land, where nature pours forth a bounteous return for the toil of man. And yet this country-side of peace and plenty was the scene of the worst

horrors of the war. The first village you come to after leaving Yeni Sagra to the south is Ilidscha. This village was destroyed by the Russians, and is still in ruins. The few families we found there were Bulgarian, but the place is really remarkable for its warm baths. If I could transplant this spring from the wilds of Bulgaria to some civilized country, I should not only make my own fortune, I should be a public benefactor. However, properly to appreciate a swim in a warm bath, you should first travel for a few days in a Bulgarian cart. Our journey through the Tundscha valley is nothing more or less than a visit to a succession of villages, partially or wholly destroyed by the Turks or Russians. We had not travelled far from Ilidscha, when we came to a village called Rizar. I never saw a village more completely desolate. Sweet Auburn herself did not more "confess the tyrant's power." Rizar was a purely Turkish village before the war, but the

Bashi-Bazouks are no respecters of persons. They paid a visit to the village, and sacked it. I met one solitary woodman, and was surprised to learn from him that some Turkish and Bulgarian families were inhabiting the ruins. This man was a Bulgarian, so I asked him how near was the nearest church. "Oh," he said, in an unconcerned way, "over the mountains." I believe I should have had to go a long way over the mountains before I came to a Christian church. I had noticed several ruined mosques, but no churches. I commented on the fact to the prefect in Kezanlik. He admitted that the Bulgarians were not at present a religious people, but added, "They must become religious." He imputed their indifference to religion to the Greeks, who had made religion hateful in their eyes. There was some truth in this, for the Greek ecclesiastics had not only drawn enormous revenues from the Bulgarians, but had conducted divine service in the Greek language—

an unknown tongue to the peasants. It is worthy of notice that a Bulgarian, when speaking of his national misfortunes, is more likely to lay them at the door of the Greeks than of the Turks. Detestation of the Hellenes is the one sentiment that all Bulgarians have in common. The worthy prefect may speak of the necessity of the people becoming religious; one thing is certain, that they are Gallios at present. The gymnasts, both in Eastern Roumelia and Bulgaria, have their grand parade day on Sunday. I have met only with one Bulgarian who objected to this custom as a breach of the sabbath day. This gentleman was the translator of the Bulgarian Constitution, which appeared in the *Times*. He had the courage at a public meeting in Tirnova to tell his audience that to drill on Sunday was not in accordance with the divine law. The Bulgarians listened to him, but continue their Sunday parade. I may mention, however, that the only paper published in

Tirnova is a religious one, called *Justice.* I do not know whether its circulation is a wide one.

To continue our journey. We jogged along the valley to a village called Nicholai. This was occupied before the war by Turks and Christians in equal moieties. It was held by the Turkish regular forces, and to their credit be it said that very few houses had been injured. It formed a striking contrast to the village we had left, which had been occupied by Bashi-Bazouks. The road between the two villages lay between gravestones of Turks who had fallen in the campaign of 1828. There were also some new gravestones of the late war. It is mementoes of this kind which bring home to your mind the inveterate and undying hatred which Russia bears to the Osmanli. And yet, strange as it may sound, it is doubtful whether the Turk does not dislike the Englishman more than the Russian. A friend of mine was talking on the subject of England's unpopularity to Safvet Pacha, the

late Minister of Foreign Affairs. The polite old man contradicted him, but, in spite of Safvet Pacha's statement to the contrary, there can be no doubt that England is almost as unpopular in Turkey as she is in Bulgaria. The feeling that I was unpopular did not, however, distress me as I lay under a spreading walnut tree in Nicholai. Here the caravan, consisting of my travelling companion, our dog, our coachman, and our "Luxury," ate their frugal meal of dry bread and still drier chicken.

The valley of the Tundscha now lay spread before us. To our right lay the Pass of the Heilboaz, or the Pass of the Robber Heil. It was worthy of having a robber for its sponsor. It is a dark and gloomy mountain gorge, through which the Russians made their first dash across the Balkans in 1877. The pass debouches on to the plain through a pretty little orchard that surrounds a watermill, and close to the mouth of the defile is a small Russian monument. The

Russians differ from ourselves in their military monuments. Both in the Crimea and at Scutari our monuments bear inscriptions in several languages. The Russian monuments at Schipka and elsewhere bear only inscriptions in the national tongue. One might gather from this that Russia fought more as an independent nation than England. This is not the case, as no country has fought more campaigns under European inspection than Russia has done. She has never yet concluded a treaty with vanquished Turkey which has not been considerably modified by Europe. Unfortunately, although Europe has tempered the wind to Turkey, she has never been able to check its violence while the storm raged. I have spoken with many able and experienced men in Turkey, and they have all assured me that in the conduct of the war there was not a pin to choose, as the saying is, between the Russians and the Turks. There can be no doubt, too, that some of the worst

atrocities of the war—atrocities which rival the black deeds of the Bashi-Bazouks—were committed by the Bulgarians themselves. In the lovely village of Myghlys, which lies embowered in rose gardens, sixty Mohammedan women were violated and then murdered by Bulgarians. "They were not our neighbours who did it," said an old Turk to the correspondent of the *Times*. These scoundrels came from distant villages. I have myself investigated the story, and find it absolutely correct. I happened to meet an Austrian Count, and he informed me that he was almost an eye-witness of the massacre.

It was the evening of a lovely autumn day when we entered Myghlys. The Turkish houses were more or less in ruins, but in other respects the village was in a most flourishing condition. The school-house had a flaming Russian inscription and imperial eagle painted on it. Our "Luxury" informed us that Russian

was the language taught in the school. I was inclined to believe him, as Bulgarian education is good, and always comprises one foreign language. I inquired, and found that this Greek was trying to palm off his wretched inventions on me. Myghlys is hedged in with rose gardens and vineyards and orchards. It is here that the roses bloom from which the world-famed attar of roses is made. The peasants, both men and women, were returning from their labour. Every one seemed industrious and happy. The whole scene was charming, and reminded me forcibly of my English home. The signs of toil and plenty were all around me. It is a mistake to speak of the Bulgarians as an idle race. A well-known writer on Bulgaria depicts the Bulgarians as a drunken and a slothful people, whose working days are picnics enlivened by music and wine. This is not the case. The Bulgarians are agriculturists. They are not merchants like the Greeks; they are emphatically

tillers of the soil. Colonel Blunt told me that in Adrianople he had obtained work for some Turkish refugees. The men had families to support, and during the fine weather they worked, but when the rainy reason began they ceased to work. Now, a Bulgarian would never do this. He likes money far too much to play such pranks. In fact, the Bulgarian is a money-grub; and yet Captain St. Clair, in his book on Bulgaria, gives us a picture of the Bulgarian lying drunk on the dung-heap, and asks us to compare him with that son of toil, the Turk!

The village of Kezanlik is charmingly situated, and from the trade carried on in attar of roses is a place of some importance. This, too, was a mixed Christian and Mohammedan village before the war, but the Turkish quarter has been destroyed. Strange to say, this destruction of property was committed not by Christians, but by Bashi-Bazouks. When Suleiman Pacha routed the Russians at Eski Sagra in 1877, he

allowed them leisurely to fall back on Yeni Sagra, while he amused himself by sacking Eski Sagra. Then, with the same fatal apathy, Suleiman halted, destroying Turkish property at Kezanlik, while the Russians were entrenching themselves at Schipka. The Turkish quarter of the town was gutted, because Turks were the merchants of the town, and their houses gave the richest spoil. The history of Schipka is too well known to need retelling. It is not, however, so well known in England as in Turkey that one reason for Suleiman's abominable treachery (and no other word can be given to his conduct) was the foolish speech of the Sultan, that whichever of his three generals, Mehemet Ali, Osman, or Suleiman, gained the most decisive victory over the Russians should be his Minister for War. The most singular part of Suleiman's conduct is that he did not appear anxious to gain a victory himself. The merest rustic can see how easy it would have been to

cut off the Russian supplies from Gabrova. Yet the Turkish commander-in-chief never attempted it. An Englishman, Colonel Campbell, seized Fort St. Nicholas, and held it for one quarter of an hour, but he had to retire, as the Turkish commander-in-chief did not choose to send him reinforcements. The nationality of this "Turkish" commander is itself significant. Suleiman Pacha is a renegade Jew of Salonica. At the age of sixteen he was converted to Islamism, and entered the military school at Constantinople. He became the *protégé* of Midhat Pacha, and, thanks to so powerful a patron, he rapidly rose in the service. At the age of thirty, he was a bey, without having used any weapon more dangerous than his pen. In England we have plenty of generals who have never been in action, but this is the exception in Turkey. From Joshua to Massena the Jews can boast of some good generals, but Suleiman can scarcely rank among the number. Apart

from all question of treason or no treason, Suleiman appears to have been always three days too late. When he at last fell back from Schipka to Ichtiman, he remained there long enough to give Skobeleff three days' start of him in his march to Adrianople. This practically terminated the war. Yet Suleiman is a clever man. My friend, Dr. Stambolski, of Gabrova, was, at the time of the breaking out of the late war, in the Turkish service. As a Bulgarian, he was shipped off by the Turks to Yemen. From this distant province he was returning with the peace to Europe, when at Port Said he met his old acquaintance, Suleiman Pacha. The Bulgarian doctor was returning from exile; the Turkish pacha was going into exile. The doctor greeted Suleiman, who had been degraded from his rank of pacha, as "Suleiman Effendi." The term "effendi" means little more than "mister" or "esquire." But the fallen man was as confident as ever. "These are the

accidents," he said, "which overthrow men the most far-seeing. But I shall return, and again you will see me at the head of affairs." Suleiman was exiled for twelve years, but the Sultan has cut down his term to six—"such is the breath of kings." I shall never be surprised to hear that Suleiman has returned and has been installed as Minister of War at the Seraskierate.

As we left Kesanlik for Schipka we passed through a little forest of fruit trees before we entered on the wide-stretching plain which faces Schipka. Spurs of the Balkans shut in this plain on all sides. This plain is considerably larger than the plain of Waterloo. On our right, as we came out of the orchards, were the mounds on which the surgeons' operating tents were pitched; on the left were larger mounds, which were the burial-mounds of the Turks who fell in battle. As a general rule, of the three races that fell at Schipka, the tombs of the Russians are marked with marble crosses, the

Bulgarians with wooden crosses, and the Turks with no monument at all. There are three grassy graves in a retired valley near the Schipka Pass which it is very difficult for a foreigner to visit. The Turk is afraid of showing them, the Bulgarian will not show them. Into a lonely ravine, not far from the Schipka Pass, the Bulgarians brought 150 Turks. Fifty were taken first, and ordered to dig a trench. They did so, and then were all shot down and huddled into the pit of their own digging. Thus the whole 150 were disposed of. Those who speak of the Bulgarians as a nation that has come out of the late war with spotless reputation are either ignorant or wilfully blind to facts. The Bulgarians have before them a great future, and I for one prefer to look to the future than to the past. But as a matter of historical accuracy, it cannot be denied that the late war was not carried on as a civilized warfare. The Bulgarians had no doubt the strongest provoca-

tion, but Myghlys and this valley in the lonely Balkans are witnesses to a spirit of retaliation as appalling as the worst acts of oppression which excited it.

The village of Schipka was entirely destroyed in the late war. Here again I can bear evidence to the industry of the Bulgarians. They were all hard at work rebuilding their houses, and, from what I could see, with substantial material. In fact, the towns and villages of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia must improve now that Turkish rule is gone. In the good old days, a Bulgarian did not dare to appear wealthy, or he would be more heavily taxed than he was already. A house with a most squalid appearance towards the street was probably furnished in a comfortable manner, and possessed a good garden. Nor would a Bulgarian have kept a horse, for fear of it being requisitioned. He had to content himself with oxen. All this is changed now. In a few

years, I hope, the appearance of the country will be greatly improved. Clean inns will take the place of filthy khans. Shops, pavements, drains, gas, and other improvements, which we do not consider so very modern, will appear. But the Schipka Pass will remain unaltered, and must remain interesting, so long as there is an Eastern Question.

The position of the opposing armies at Schipka is best explained by stating that the Schipka Pass of history consists of three parallel spurs of the Balkans. The centre spur was held by the Russians; the two flanking spurs by the Turks. The Turks were therefore in a position to keep up a fire from both flanks on the Russians, but, as every one knows, shells fall harmless among earthworks. A road now leads from the village of Schipka to Gabrova, and this road passes about 300 yards under Fort St. Nicholas. But the ordinary traveller is already tired. He has climbed up a steep road for about one hour

and a half, and Fort St. Nicholas itself is perched on the top of a precipitous rock. One side of it is impregnable, and even the tourist has to seek strength from his flask before he can totter to the top; but the Turks had the foolhardiness to attack the fort on this side, and a *mêlée* of red fezes and white caps soaked with rain and frozen with frost tells the tale of this hopeless assault. The hillsides for the first part of the way from Schipka are perfectly bare, but afterwards they are beautifully wooded. During the fighting in the pass, sometimes for days or an entire week there was a lull, and not a shot was fired. Both sides were without ammunition. Then would come the time for the birds, and from the woods would arise quite a concert, as if no war were going on and all the world were at peace. The Russians put forward the Roumanians at Plevna and the Bulgarians at Schipka. Indeed, the Bulgarians assume a boastful strain, and talk as if they alone had

fought at Schipka. The fighting at Schipka is without a parallel in history. Never before or since have so many lives been uselessly thrown away as when Suleiman Pacha sat down before Schipka. The lives of thousands of gallant Turks were ruthlessly sacrificed to gratify the ambition of a renegade pacha. But the Turks are a strange people. I have heard a Turkish officer gravely argue that Suleiman was the best general they had in the late war. For my own part, I regard him as an instrument of Providence for bringing defeat on some of the best soldiers of Europe, and in that way giving liberty to a nation that demanded and deserved to be free.

It took us between three and four hours to cross the Schipka, and a two hours' drive then brought us to Gabrova. The country north of the Schipka is extremely pretty, and looks, in fact, quite like an English landscape after a dry summer. There is nothing special

to record between Gabrova and Tirnova, the ancient capital of Bulgaria. Tirnova is built upon terraces, and is one of the most picturesque towns in the world. The Turks are returning here, but the whole Turkish quarter is in ruins. When the Russians advanced upon Gabrova, the Turks fled from Tirnova. The Russians accordingly used their houses as firewood. The mosques were gutted, I cannot say by a bigoted populace, as the Bulgarians are not a religious people. There is now, however, a better spirit abroad, such a spirit as dictated the Exarch's encyclical letter, in which he exhorts his flock, as true Christians, to live at charity with all men. As one example is better than many words, I will give an instance to support my proposition that the Bulgarians will eventually govern their country with justice and moderation. After the war a Turk returned to his home at Kesanlik. He brought with him a wife, who was young and pretty. This woman

was regarded with eyes of no good favour by a Bulgarian policeman. I cannot call the ruffian a Christian. This fellow made improper advances to the Turk's wife, but finding that neither he nor his emissaries met with any success, he at last sent an ultimatum to the poor woman that unless she acceded to his vile suggestions he would denounce her husband to the Governor, and advise his immediate expulsion from the country. The Turk did not bear a good character, and all these things were a sore trouble both to him and his wife. In his distress the Turk went to a Christian friend, a tailor, and asked his advice. "Oh," said the tailor, "go and tell the prefect." Now this had never occurred to the Turk. He had never thought of appealing to a Christian Governor for protection. However, he took his friend's advice, and laid his case before the Governor of Kesanlik. The Governor summoned before him the policeman and his abominable emissaries,

the tailor, the Turk, and the woman herself. He examined all parties, and the guilt of the Bulgarian being clearly proved, he there and then gave the scoundrel a sound thrashing, and sent him to prison for fifteen days. The whole tale reads like a story from the Old Testament. The name of the Governor is Petre Ivanoff. I have the honour of knowing this just man, and if all prefects were like him Eastern Roumelia would indeed be a favoured land. I rejoice in bringing my letters on Bulgaria to a conclusion with the name of this Bulgarian.

I have not, I trust, been unduly partial to the Bulgarians or unfair to the Turks, nor have I concealed the faults of the Christian rayah any more than I have the faults of his former Turkish ruler. But what I do say is that the Bulgarian possesses three qualities which ensure him (without the aid of Russian arms) the future supremacy in the Turkish peninsula. He is intelligent, industrious, and economical. It is

useless and foolish in us to set our faces vigorously to the past, and to regret what is beyond recall. Consistency of conduct may be a consolation to the individual, but what is more important than consistency is justice. We may depend upon it that if we abet and aid this young and vigorous Bulgarian nation, we shall not only be doing what is morally right, but we shall be incalculably strengthening English interest in the East.

My task is done; but I shall be amply repaid for my toils, my privations, and my intermittent fever, if I can induce one thoughtful man, who has formed an altogether unfavourable opinion of the Bulgarians, to modify that opinion.

PRINTED AT THE CAXTON PRESS, BECCLES.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018